



We build strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter.

April 18, 2025

To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction

RE: Support for SB 5505 - \$100.9 million in General Obligation Bonds for LIFT Homeownership

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Nosse and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shannon Vilhauer and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. On behalf of our organization and the 23 local Habitat for Humanity affiliates we serve, we urge your strong support for Senate Bill 5505. In particular, please support POP 518, that includes \$100.9 million in Article XI-Q General Obligation Bonds to support LIFT Homeownership.

For a majority of households in the United States, homeownership is affordable housing. If you were fortunate enough to purchase a typical Oregon home 20 years ago (in 2005), your monthly mortgage payment is less than half of the market-rate rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in the same community.

Homeownership is key to building household stability, generational wealth, and strong communities, yet it remains out of reach for far too many Oregon households.

We are confronting the following shared challenges:

- *For every dollar Oregonians earned in wage increases between 2013 and 2022, the median sales price of a home increased by \$7.10.*
- This crisis disproportionately impacts communities of color, with a 15% homeownership gap between white households and households who identify as black, indigenous, Hispanic/Latinx and other people of color.
- Our state ranks 43rd in the nation for homeownership rates.

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon has the honor of supporting the Unlocking Homeownership Coalition, a group of organizations, associations and municipalities fighting for everyday Oregonians who are struggling to make the dream of owning a home a reality.

We're pushing for smart, people-focused investments and policies in 2025 that will make a meaningful difference in addressing our state's housing crisis. We thank Governor Kotek for prioritizing investments that will increase access to homeownership in her recommended budget. In particular, POP 518 includes \$100.9 million in Article XI-Q General Obligation Bonds to support LIFT Homeownership.

Oregon's investment in the Local Innovation and Fast Track Homeownership program will expand the supply of homes affordable to Oregonians who earn up to 80% of the area median income (AMI). This program stimulates the rapid development of multi-home sites, with homes ready for sale within 36 months of receiving a funding reservation. Recent program improvements will ensure that this supply accelerator will function as intended to stimulate rural homeownership development, as well as denser urban developments.

To date, Oregon Housing and Community Services has leveraged LIFT Homeownership funding to stimulate the construction of 963 permanently affordable, entry-level homes across the state. LIFT has helped many affordable homeownership developers to *triple* their production of new homes. The majority of LIFT Homeownership-funded developments include homes designed to accommodate larger households, with up to five bedrooms per home. All homes built under this program meet strict energy efficiency standards and often accommodate aging in place.

We urge you to meaningfully advance homeownership supply, access and stability in the coming biennium through this targeted investment. **Together, we can open the doors to homeownership for thousands of Oregonians, close the racial wealth gap, and build a more equitable future for our state.** Please support SB 5505, especially the \$100.9 LIFT Homeownership investment.

Thank you for your leadership and support,



Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director