

Submitter: Taylor Wilkinson
On Behalf Of: LIFT Homeownership
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or SB5702
Topic:

Dear Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Nosse, and members of the committee,

I am writing as the Homeownership Program Coordinator for Bend-Redmond Habitat for Humanity, urging the Legislature to allocate \$100 million in General Obligation Bonds for the LIFT Homeownership Program in Senate Bill 5702.

I've seen first hand how transformative affordable homeownership is to the families in our community. Stable housing changes lives for the better and makes communities stronger, healthier, and safer. In Central Oregon, many of the people who keep our communities running — teachers, health care workers, service workers, and tradespeople, can no longer afford to live where they work. More than half of Bend's workforce now commutes from outside the city due to rising housing costs. This strains families, increases traffic and environmental impacts, and weakens community stability.

LIFT Homeownership is one of Oregon's most effective tools for creating permanently affordable homes for first-time buyers. These are not one-time investments. Many LIFT-supported homes are placed in community land trusts or structured to remain affordable long term, serving multiple income-qualified buyers over time. A single public investment can support generation after generation of homeowners, creating lasting community assets rather than temporary relief.

Local affordable homeownership developers have shovel-ready projects in our region today. Every \$1 million invested through LIFT supports the construction of approximately five new homes, leveraging additional local and private funding. A \$100 million investment would help create roughly 500 homes statewide — homes that remain affordable and continue delivering public benefit for decades.

This level of investment reflects the scale of Oregon's housing production gap. We are significantly behind in meeting demand, and catching up requires bold, targeted action. LIFT represents a long-term capital investment in stable communities, workforce retention, and generational opportunity.

Please include \$100 million for LIFT Homeownership in SB 5702 and ensure that Central Oregon communities are not left behind in the statewide response to our housing shortage.