



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

February 13, 2026

House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 4136

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Werner Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Briar Smith, and I am the Executive Director of Tillamook County Habitat for Humanity. I am writing in strong support of HB 4136 because it makes a practical and targeted investment in expanding access to homeownership for first-time and first-generation buyers while strengthening the long-term stability of Oregon communities. In coastal and rural communities like Tillamook County, the housing crisis is especially acute. Families who live and work locally are increasingly priced out of homeownership due to high home prices, limited inventory, and competition from vacation and second-home buyers. Even households with steady employment often find that saving for a down payment is the single greatest barrier preventing them from purchasing a home and putting down roots in their community.

Homeownership remains one of the most effective tools for building financial stability, strengthening families, and fostering long-term community connection. Yet for many of the families we serve, the upfront cost of a down payment makes homeownership feel unattainable, despite strong readiness and commitment. Without targeted assistance, these households remain stuck in an increasingly expensive rental market with little opportunity to build equity or long-term security.

HB 4136 addresses this challenge through a thoughtful and narrowly tailored policy change. By ending the mortgage interest deduction for single-use and second-home vacation properties—while preserving it for primary residences—the bill redirects resources toward down payment assistance for first-time and first-generation homebuyers. This approach prioritizes people who will live in their homes year-round, contribute to local economies, and invest in their communities.

Down payment assistance has proven to be one of the most effective tools for expanding sustainable homeownership. In recent years, Oregon Housing and Community Services has partnered with nonprofit organizations to successfully deliver down payment assistance



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paired with HUD-certified homebuyer education. These programs help buyers not only purchase homes, but succeed as long-term, stable homeowners. Despite strong outcomes, the lack of a dedicated funding source limits how many families can be served.

HB 4136 would provide a stable and ongoing investment—approximately \$9–10 million per year—ensuring more Oregon families have access to this proven pathway to homeownership. For communities like Tillamook County, this means more local families staying local, stronger neighborhoods, and a more resilient workforce.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 4136 and help expand equitable, sustainable access to homeownership across Oregon.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Briar Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Briar Smith

Executive Director

Tillamook County Habitat for Humanity