



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

My name is Steve Messinetti, and I serve as President and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Portland Region. Thank you for the opportunity to express strong support for allocating an additional **\$100 million in General Obligation Bonds** for the **LIFT Homeownership Program** in **Senate Bill 5702**.

Since I began my role at Habitat 20 years ago, Oregon families have experienced a profound shift in housing affordability. While median income has increased roughly 30%, the cost of housing has surged by nearly 300%. Homeownership—once a realistic pathway to stability for working families—is now out of reach for most low- and moderate-income households. As a result, Oregon has one of the lowest homeownership rates in the nation.

A major driver of this trend is the lack of supply of affordable, entry-level homes. Builders have largely stopped producing them, and without intentional incentives, they will not return to this segment of the market.

The LIFT Homeownership Program has been one of the most successful tools the state has deployed to address this gap. LIFT has enabled the creation of new, family-sized, entry-level homes in communities across Oregon—homes that are affordable to first-time buyers and that remain affordable for future buyers through a shared equity model.

Because of LIFT's success, nonprofit homeownership providers across the state have expanded their capacity to build more of these homes. However, without an expansion of LIFT resources, this hard-won capacity will go underutilized. Shovel-ready projects will sit idle, and mortgage-ready households will be left without homes they can afford to buy.

At Habitat for Humanity Portland Region, we have built LIFT-supported communities in Hillsboro, Portland, King City, Gresham, and Lake Oswego, leveraging additional private and local public resources with every project. We now have land secured for 90 additional homes across five locations. Volunteers, staff, and local contractors are ready to build—once the necessary resources are available.

We know the solution works. When families are able to purchase a home with an affordable mortgage, their children do better in school, parents thrive at work, and the entire household becomes healthier and more financially stable. Homeownership strengthens local economies as families put down roots, businesses retain employees, and communities gain long-term stability and spending power.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **include \$100 million for LIFT Homeownership in SB 5702**, and make first-time homeownership a reality for mortgage-ready families throughout Oregon.

Thank you for your leadership and service to Oregon.

Sincerely,

Steve Messinetti, President & CEO