



February 15, 2019

INNOVATIVE HOUSING, INC.

Chair Keny-Guyer
Vice-Chair Noble
Vice-Chair Sanchez
House Human Services and Housing Committee
Via email: hhs.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov.

RE: Support for SB 608

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Committee,

I am the Executive Director of Innovative Housing, Inc. (IHI) and am writing on behalf of our many low-income residents to ask that you support SB 608. IHI is a nonprofit affordable housing developer and operator. We currently own and operate over 800 affordable rental units in Oregon, each of which is in incredibly high demand and houses families or individuals who are struggling to make ends meet. Most of our housing is located in the Portland Metro area, but we also have apartments in Albany and are working on multiple sites along the coast. Many of our homes are set aside for people with special needs or high barriers to housing, including histories of homelessness, disabilities, criminal records, and little or no income. The rest of our portfolio houses families who simply cannot afford market rate housing on the wages they earn.

Statewide, we have a shortage of housing that is affordable to those who need it. Our residents work hard, many of them at multiple jobs, and still cannot afford market rents. At IHI, we believe that everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home and our top priority is keeping our residents stably housed. We know that housing instability has pervasive negative effects on parents and children, their performance at work, and their academic success. Nonprofit providers do not have enough units to meet our State's need, so many low-income households must rely on market rate housing and are at the mercy of that market. No cause and economic evictions are causing incalculable damage to families who must deal with the stress of not knowing whether they will be able to keep a roof over their heads.

Unfortunately, Oregon cannot yet provide regulated, rent-restricted affordable housing to everyone who needs it, but we can create a regulatory environment that prioritizes housing stability for all of Oregon's residents. Several years into our ongoing "housing crisis," where rents continue to outpace income growth, people who rent their homes are depending on the Legislature to provide them with basic protections and stability. SB 608 takes a moderate approach to rent regulation, balancing the interests of renters and landlords. Please take action to protect Oregon's struggling renter households and vote yes on SB 608.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important bill. Thank you also for your hard work and service to Oregon's citizens. We appreciate you.

Sincerely,

Sarah J. Stevenson
Executive Director