



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 3, 2019

House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

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

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 2055 and HB 2056, and the Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator proposal from Oregon Housing and Community Services, and the Office of Governor Brown.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including non-profit housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them, and vacancy rates have dropped precipitously towards zero in communities across Oregon. People are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table. During the last school year, over 22,000 of our school children in grades K – 12 experienced homelessness at some point during the year.

We know that Oregon has a serious and significant problem with housing in communities across the state, and that the lack of housing that is both available and affordable is impacting people with a range of incomes. One way this problem manifests is in our workforce.

Over the last three years, we have heard numerous stories of employers being unable to attract or maintain talented workers because they simply cannot find housing near their work. This problem spans the income spectrum:

- At the Coast, a popular restaurant can no longer open its dining room because of a lack of housing for minimum wage workers.
- Further south, in Tillamook, the Creamery has shared publicly<sup>1</sup> about the struggles with finding workers who can also find a place to live in the community.
- Communities share stories about being unable to hire high-level positions such as city managers or health department managers because of the lack of housing.
- In the Gorge, there are common stories about teachers sleeping in vans while looking for housing at the beginning of the school year.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.streetroots.org/2018/06/22/tillamook-creamery-partners-locals-tackle-area-housing-shortage>

These are just a few of the examples we hear. We also have heard stories of employees commuting extreme distances to work every morning and evening because they cannot find housing near their employment.

We believe we need to try a range of strategies to solve the problems our communities are facing. The Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator is an innovative partnership between local jurisdictions, housing developers, and employers to bring together resources and collaborate to build needed housing. Each partner has something to share, and can benefit from working together.

HB 2055 will provide \$15 million to support the acquisition, construction, or redevelopment of workforce housing, or the acquisition of land and infrastructure to support workforce housing. HB 2055 will support the connection of employers, developers, property owners, and landlords with local communities and housing providers.

HB 2056 will update a current loan guarantee program that exists within Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) to be more effective, and work in partnership with HB 2055. HB 2056 directs that interest earnings stay within the program; increases income eligibility to 120% of area median income while maintaining half of the funds serve people earning very low incomes (50% or less of the area median income); and updates the program to include home ownership and land acquisition.

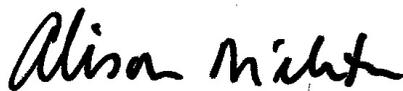
Together, these two bills will create an effective Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator program to help spur needed housing development, build creative partnerships between employers, governments, and housing developers, and address a critical need our communities are facing. We urge your support.

We know what home, and what stable housing, means to all of us. When people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits. Kids are able to focus on the things that matter – being kids, doing their homework – instead of worrying about where their families will sleep at night. Parents are able to focus on work. Safe and stable housing that people can afford is key to accessing opportunity.

We urge you to support HB 2055 and HB 2056, and the Greater Oregon Housing Accelerator program.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh  
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Cc:

James LaBar, Housing Policy Advisor, Office of Governor Kate Brown

Margaret Salazar, Director, Oregon Housing and Community Services

Ariel Nelson, Government Relations and Communications Liaison, Oregon Housing and Community Services

## **Housing Alliance Members**

1000 Friends of Oregon  
211info  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
BRIDGE Housing  
CASA of Oregon  
Central City Concern  
Chrisman Development  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Creswell  
City of Eugene  
City of Forest Grove  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Hood River  
City of Portland  
City of Tigard  
Coalition of Community Health Clinics  
Coalition of Housing Advocates  
Common Ground OR-WA  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Community Action Team  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Community Housing Fund  
Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Community Vision  
Cornerstone Community Housing  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Enhabit  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Fair Housing Council of Oregon  
FOOD for Lane County  
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon  
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East  
Hacienda CDC  
Housing Authority of Clackamas County  
Housing Development Center  
Housing Oregon  
Human Solutions  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
Impact Northwest  
Innovative Housing, Inc.  
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty  
JOIN  
Lane County Health and Human Services  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Lincoln County  
Looking Glass Community Services  
Mainstream Housing, Inc  
Metro  
Mid Columbia Housing Authority  
Native American Youth and Family Center  
(NAYA)  
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.  
(NEDCO)  
Neighborhood Partnerships  
NeighborImpact  
NeighborWorks Umpqua  
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing  
Northwest Housing Alternatives  
Northwest Pilot Project  
Oregon AFSCME Council 75  
Oregon Center for Christian Voices  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Oregon Food Bank  
Oregon Housing Authorities  
Oregon Law Center  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
Portland Homeless Family Solutions  
Portland Housing Center  
Proud Ground  
Raphael House  
REACH CDC  
Rogue Action Center  
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.  
ShelterCare  
Sisters Habitat for Humanity  
Sponsors, Inc.  
SquareOne Villages  
Street Roots  
Transition Projects  
Turning Point  
Washington County  
Welcome Home Coalition  
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services