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RoseburgChamber.com

February 16, 2026

To the Honorable Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Drazen and Members of the
Senate Committee on Commerce & General Government,

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 1514 for the Restoration of Local Control of Homelessness Policy

On behalf of the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce, the businesses, organizations and individuals we represent throughout Douglas County, I urge you to repeal HB 3115 by supporting and voting yes on SB 1514. Current law, which removed local control to address the complex issues surrounding homelessness, has proven to be a failed endeavor. Unsheltered homelessness has continued to increase, and the damage to our parks and public spaces due to unsanctioned homeless camps will take years to repair. Restoring local authority to address our homelessness crisis is the only way significant long-term solutions will be achieved.

Each community in Oregon is unique and should be allowed to craft solutions that fit our specific needs and resources. Complex problems require a range of tools and approaches. HB 3115 significantly limits those tools, particularly for rural communities that already face resource constraints. Homelessness is not solely an urban issue, and rural voices deserve equal consideration in forming policy responses.

Homelessness is a local issue that requires a local response. Homelessness drivers in Roseburg are not the same as in larger towns like Salem or Portland. Rural Oregon faces different economic realities, different service capacities and different public safety challenges. Oregonians expect their local elected officials to respond to the needs of their individual communities. Unfortunately, under HB 3115, local governments' hands remain tied.

Continuing to allow unsheltered homelessness to overrun parks and public spaces while draining public resources is not effective governance. Supporting SB 1514 would restore local authority and empower communities to collaborate and implement solutions that work best for their residents. The damage done in and to our community since the passage of HB 3115 can only be corrected when local challenges are countered with local authority and local solutions.

The "objectively reasonable" standard created by HB 3115 has generated confusion and uncertainty. It is poorly defined, inconsistently interpreted and has exposed local governments to the threat of costly litigation. In rural communities with limited tax bases, the risk of expensive lawsuits alone can paralyze thoughtful local policymaking. Local governments must have the ability to adopt clear, enforceable public camping ordinances that reflect community standards while maintaining safety, sanitation and access to public spaces for all that community's residents.



To advocate for and be the voice of the business community in the greater Roseburg area.

To strengthen, enhance and protect our members through political advocacy, economical development, community promotion and member programs and services.

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As you are aware, when the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3115 in 2021, it codified the *Martin v. Boise* standard in Oregon law and limited how local governments could regulate public camping. HB 3115 remains in effect despite the U.S. Supreme Court overturning this standard in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*. As a result, local governments are strained, creating uncertainty and litigation. SB 1514 would simply repeal 3115, allowing local communities to address encampments in ways that protect public safety. Repealing HB 3115 does not criminalize being homeless. SB 1514 does not create new penalties or enforcements. It simply restores the authority of local governments to adopt public camping ordinances consistent with the principles and expectation of their communities, just like is currently allowed in the other 49 states in the US.

From a business perspective, when public spaces become unsafe, inaccessible or unsanitary, it affects customer traffic, workforce recruitment, visitor perceptions and overall community confidence. Our local businesses want thoughtful solutions, but they also need safe, high-functioning, workable, vibrant downtowns and public spaces.

The Legislature has correctly prioritized housing and homelessness in recent sessions. However, many communities have not yet seen, nor will they see, measurable results until local control is part of the solution. HB 3115 has effectively paralyzed local responses to unsanctioned public camping, even with the Supreme Court ruling that such restrictions are constitutionally permissible.

The Legislature must act in 2026 to restore local control and safety. SB 1514 restores balance, transparency and clarity. But, most importantly, it restores the ability of local communities to respond to local challenges. We respectfully urge your "yes" vote on SB 1514 to give our local governments more tools to effectively respond to unsanctioned public camping. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

ROSEBURG AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
DOUGLAS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Debra L. Fromdahl, IOM
President & CEO

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