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Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation,

Working with over 150 congregations, organizations, and interfaith partners, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) strives to envision communities of faith in ministry together creating a more peaceful, just, sustainable, and compassionate world.

EMO supports SB 755 and the implementation of Measure 110.

Measure 110 represents a more robust, compassionate and effective response to Oregon's addiction crisis. At EMO we affirm the rights of all people to health care and our responsibility to advocate for the overall health and stability of families and communities. We know that addiction is a health crisis that cannot be addressed through incarceration. Currently, effective and accessible services for those struggling with addiction are severely lacking. Increasing funding for these services and decriminalizing addiction are vital steps toward a more just system.

The decriminalization of low-level possession of drugs is one of the ways that Oregon can address the racial inequities in our criminal justice system. Black Oregonians are over three times more likely than white Oregonians to be arrested for drug possession, despite similar rates of drug use. This alarming disparity emphasizes the need for immediate action to disrupt the discriminatory policies that have unjustly criminalized communities of color.

Oregon voters have made it clear that they believe in a more compassionate and health-based approach to addiction and addiction services. We echo this call and urge you to support SB 755 and join us in serving and investing in the safety and well-being of our communities.

Sincerely,

Ella Burke

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO)