



Chair Meek, Vice-Chair McLane, and members of the committee,

Sightline Institute is an independent, nonpartisan think tank working to make the Pacific Northwest a global model of sustainability. I work on our housing program, looking for ways we can affordably and efficiently house every Oregonian.

SB 684 is a thoughtful and creative way to finance and create affordable homes. **Mixed-income publicly owned housing is a useful part of housing markets in other states and around the world; this legislation would start to build Oregon's skills to create it here.** Because mixed-income buildings must compete with other market-rate homes nearby, their owners and operators have useful incentives to design and maintain excellent homes.

Another possible benefit of this program: many smaller cities in Oregon would benefit from more multifamily housing and have local prices high enough to support new construction, but are simply too small to attract private capital from out of state. Oregon may be able to see its own opportunities that private investors from elsewhere would miss.

One note of caution, gathered from similar programs elsewhere: The success of programs like this depends on their political independence. If this were to become a slush fund for money-losing projects that happen to be favored by elected officials, the money would cease to revolve as efficiently as we all would want. We hope the program can be set up and administered with independence and the public's fiscal interest in mind.

The uptake of this program may be limited by many factors, from the state's mandate of above-market wages to the financing requirements. Whatever happens, we hope proponents of this concept will keep working on it. It's too good an idea to ignore.

Michael Andersen
director, cities + towns