



FISH CONSTRUCTION NW, INC.

March 30, 2021

Chair Kayse Jama  
Senate Committee on Housing & Development  
Oregon State Capitol

Dear Chair Jama and Committee Members,

I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 458 (-2) which would be a critical step towards providing needed housing opportunities for families in Oregon.

Fish Construction for years has been one of the larger, for-profit builders of entry level housing in the City of Portland. We have prided ourselves on utilizing city programs aimed at providing home ownership opportunities for families making at or below the median family income. As you can imagine as land prices, permit costs and material costs continue to increase, it has become increasingly harder to provide home ownership opportunities to this segment of the population.

As a Past President of the Oregon Home Builders Association, I served on a workgroup which helped with the eventual creation of House Bill 2001. House Bill 2001 was a great first step to providing missing middle housing opportunities to families in Oregon, however the housing types provided by HB 2001 are generally only rental housing product. While this is important, it does not provide an avenue for home ownership type homes. SB 458 would provide an important tool which would allow us to build a variety of middle housing types on fee simple lots, providing affordable home ownership opportunities.

It was acknowledged in HB2001 that townhomes were included in the missing middle homes needed, however the current land use system in many cities in Oregon is very cumbersome and time consuming. In many places in Oregon, since the passage of HB2001 we can easily submit for a simple building permit to build a tri-plex. However a Tri-Plex is a 3 unit building located on one tax lot, which can only be owned by one person and rented to families. If we were to build that exact same building but do a land division process to create 3 tax lots, this process can take 1- 2 years and cost thousands of dollars. Due to this, many builders do not elect to go through the land process, thus resulting in the units not getting built unless they want to have rental inventory.

To generally every neighbor or lay-person there is no difference between a Tri-Plex on 1 lot, or 3 townhouses on 3 lots. To those of us building the product and the cities that issue the permits, the difference should not be something that precludes the homes from being built (which is currently the case).

I humbly ask you to consider supporting SB458(-2) and help us provide the critically needed missing middle home ownership opportunities we sorely need.

Sincerely,

Justin Wood  
Vice President, Fish Construction NW