



February 9, 2026

Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Oregon Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SUPPORT SB 1566's provision to exempt the original or prior use of a property (both Introduced and -4 Amendment)

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Committee Members,

As Oregon's only statewide non-profit historic preservation organization, Restore Oregon works with thousands of people across the state each year to preserve, reuse, and pass forward the historic places and spaces that embody Oregon's diverse cultural heritage. By helping our fellow citizens preserve our state's unique built, natural and cultural environments, we help celebrate and promote much of what makes Oregon special.

We are writing today to express **support for SB 1566's exemption for the original/prior use – lines 14-15 on page 4 of the Introduced Bill:** "(E) Even if the project was previously used or occupied for a purpose other than residential use."

Affordable housing developers and providers need every tool and incentive available to create more housing units. Adaptive reuse (or conversion) of existing properties, regardless of their original use, will efficiently create more housing units in Oregon. **Historic preservation plays an important role in addressing the affordable housing crisis.** Our organization has celebrated and recognized many affordable housing projects that have adaptively reused historic properties. These developers can no longer make these projects work due to the recent expansion of prevailing wage requirements. There is no logical connection between a building's original use and wages. This section of the bill restores clarity and consistency to the statute while maintaining worker protections where they are intended to apply.

Affordable housing professionals need this specific exemption to restore feasibility to their projects. This small but important clarification will have a significant impact by **increasing the number of affordable housing units through the conversion or adaptive reuse of existing buildings.** We appreciate the opportunity to comment on HB 4036 and for considering Restore Oregon's comments.

Nicole Possert
Executive Director