

Submitter: Leila Aman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: SB406

My name is Leila Aman, City Manager for the City of Manzanita. I am also an urban and regional planner by education and profession. I am here to share my support of Tillamook county's continued efforts to collaboratively work with local jurisdictions on a variety of critical housing related issues including SB 406. The county has demonstrated significant leadership and movement toward addressing the critical issues affordable housing in our county. Due to these efforts the county has secured funding for a pilot project to coordinate efforts around homelessness, as well as implementing a tax abatement for workforce and affordable housing. Because of the county's efforts local cities like ours and Bay city were able to adopt this tax abatement locally. Something we would not have had the time, bandwidth or capacity to do on our own. The bill before you today will allow Tillamook county to level up with our more urban neighbors to illustrate that the law will work for rural communities too. The regulatory framework is perhaps the most important tool cities have to influence housing development. As my mentor John Fregonese used to say "make what you want to have happen the easiest thing to do" but sometimes what you want to do isn't the easiest thing to do at all and having the support of the county and the state makes all the difference in the world to get there. I base this on my experience as a Regional Planner at Metro working with communities across the Metro Region, my work at the Portland Development Commission working in the Lents Urban Renewal Area and my experience as a community development director in the city of Milwaukie when HB 2001 went into effect. HB 2001 demonstrated to me the critical importance the state plays in ensuring that local jurisdictions are both empowered and able to deliver on these revolutionary and necessary policies by providing the policy framework (requirements) and financial resources to deliver the outcomes. Even in Milwaukie where the decision makers were supportive of the goals of HB 2001 and the community wanted affordable housing, it was the guidance of the state that kept the project moving and the funding through the grant program that enabled us to develop an HB 2001 compliant code through a collaborative community process. But it wasn't easy. I firmly believe that without the state backing cities by requiring this necessary change to level set zoning to an equitable, diverse, expansive and revolutionary code that it never would have happened. Small cities like ours have far less resources but our issues are no less complex or critical. Please support Tillamook county in demonstrating that when rural communities are given the same tools and support that we too can actively address the housing crisis and provided needed housing to our communities.