



Senate Committee on Housing and Development

Testimony in support of HB 3309 A-Eng.

Andrea Meyer, Director of Government Relations

May 3, 2023

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With over 500,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.

AARP supports HB 3309 A-Eng. Although modest, it will direct the Oregon Housing and Community Services to track how many accessible units are built by unit type and what that is as a percentage of the total units funded by OHCS. This data will allow policy makers to assess if we are on track to having the number of accessible units our communities need.

The **percentage of adults over 65 in the US is expected to grow** to 22% by 2040. As one of the fastest aging states in the west, in 25 of our 36 counties Oregon, older adults already comprise 25% of the population.

According to the 2023 AARP Vital Voices survey, **aging in place is extremely or very important to almost 85% of Oregon residents age 45+**. **Seven in ten say having accessible housing in their community is extremely important or very important**. But 45% report that being able to make necessary repairs/modifications to their homes to continue living there safely would impact their ability to remain at home as they age. **Modifications are expensive and prohibitive for most.**

As we grow older, we are more likely to acquire disabilities. Today 39% of people age 65+ report having ambulatory difficulties such as walking or climbing stairs. However, **less than 1% of homes have the key accessible design features** like no-step entries, single floor living, extra-wide hallways and doors that make them livable for a lifetime. **Aging is reshaping our communities and we need to adapt** to secure an age-friendly future for all.

HB 3309 A-Eng. is an important step towards getting ready for that future and we urge passage.