



Portland: Neighbors Welcome is a pro-housing, pro-tenant grassroots membership organization dedicated to housing as a human right. We advocate for expanded housing options for people who are struggling to afford housing, along with commonsense protections for tenants.

We're writing in **strong support of HB 2558**, though we feel its scope is much too small.

It should shock and offend Oregonians that there is *anywhere* within walking distance of our high-capacity transit stations where it's illegal to build modest homes for middle-class and working-class people. In fact, many Oregonians **are** shocked to learn this. The arcane language of exclusionary zoning, carefully crafted by the well-housed and well-to-do, hides this ridiculous fact from many of us.

Many Oregonians would also find it clearly ridiculous that cities would even think about building new high-capacity transit to an area while banning lower-cost housing nearby. **These bans on lower-cost housing types are also de facto bans on regulated-affordable housing.** To build high-quality transit without allowing affordable housing to exist nearby accelerates displacement, turning transit-connected neighborhoods into playgrounds for the wealthy rather than supportive communities for working people.

Opponents of this bill made several arguments on Thursday:

- The League of Cities argued that there is *no rush to allow housing*, and that cities are overwhelmed dealing with the consequences of the pandemic. *What, they ask, is the emergency?* 15 minutes later, legislators heard testimony from Oregonians suffering due to the rising home prices that are the result of 20 years of underbuilding lower-cost housing. **Oregon would face a far smaller housing emergency today if it had lifted bans on middle-class and working-class housing 20 years ago.** Oregon should act quickly to protect against future housing emergencies.
- The Lane Transit District argued that this bill would interfere with its ability to run transit lines into low-density areas, *because of future complaints from homeowners*. If this were to happen, **homeowners would demand public investment to benefit the few, without support to benefit the many.** If LTD, Eugene, and Springfield feel the complaints of homeowners are more important than preventing displacement, they should plan to build their future transit systems without help from the state.
- The City of Eugene argued that the bill is unnecessary because it is already working on similar plans. **This claim is incompatible with Lane Transit District above.** Either anti-housing homeowners will successfully oppose housing near new high-capacity



transit lines, or they won't. If they succeed, then transit lines would have little public benefit and should not be built.

The *proposed 1/8 mile is just a 2-minute walk away; practically inside the station*. A better bill would extend the radius and allow for larger buildings, especially for projects that create below-market homes. **A 1/4 mile is just a 5-minute walk away or 1/3 mile is a 7-minute walk away - either of these would be stronger, more impactful options.** That said, this bill would improve on the status quo.

Portland: Neighbors Welcome strongly support good public transit. **Part of making transit good is ensuring people of all incomes can live near it. Please support HB 2558.**