



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

February 10, 2024

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Senator Kayse Jama, Chair
Senator Dick Anderson, Vice-Chair

RE: Testimony from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) Regarding Senate Bill 1537

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding SB 1537 related to housing.

OAPA is a nonprofit professional membership organization of over 800 planners and those who work with planning in formulating and implementing development and conservation policies at the state and local level. OAPA works to create sustainable and vibrant Oregon communities through professional development, advocacy for sound planning, providing resources to meet the challenges of growth and change, and embracing and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity.

OAPA appreciates the attention that the bill focuses on Oregon's housing crisis, and willingness to employ a variety of methods to address issues of housing production, affordability, and historical inequities. The conversations that have gone into shaping the housing policy framework and this bill have strengthened core elements of the package and led to important refinements to certain sections. We would like to highlight three of these areas:

- Funding for needed infrastructure is one of the biggest levers the state can push to facilitate housing development, and we strongly support the Housing Infrastructure Support Fund and other infrastructure funding mechanisms outlined in Sections 12-23.
- While it is clear that a lot of thought has gone into troubleshooting the regulatory adjustments concept found in Sections 37-43, the process still bears little resemblance to the effective processes for adjustments already provided in certain cities and counties, and instead would add a

new, unhelpful measure of uncertainty to the housing development process for developers, community members, and local governments.

- Additional parameters bounding the one-time UGB expansion process described in Sections 48-60 help bring this provision closer to its intended purpose. However, without more effective measures to coordinate and finance supporting infrastructure, provide a deadline for commencing construction, or ensuring that affordable units are a priority for construction within newly added areas, the newly added areas would serve only to undermine Oregon's long-standing commitment to preventing conversion of land to uncoordinated "sprawl" development.

We believe that this crucial package of interventions has improved significantly from earlier legislative concepts, but critical details remain to be worked out. Our work as planners reminds us that any policy shaping Oregon's communities can only succeed with effective implementation at the local level. We urge the committee and legislature as a whole to make the most of the remaining time in the short session to address the remaining issues in this bill to ensure that the results are equitable, environmentally sustainable, and actually result in increased housing production.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Green".

Chris Green, AICP (he/him)

Chair, Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee
Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association
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