



February 5, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court Street NE, Salem Oregon 97301

RE: SB 444 Accessible Housing

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

The City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability supports the intent of increasing the requirements for accessible housing in Oregon.

People with disabilities and older adults lack accessible, affordable housing. Many rely on social security income or part-time jobs, earning 30% of area median income or less. Census data estimates that 15% of Oregonians have a disability, however, building codes require just 2% of units in buildings of 20 or more units be physically accessible. 22 percent of all households in Portland have at least one household member with disabilities, with the share increasing to 33 percent of people over 65 reporting having at least one disability.

Legislation to increase the requirements for accessible units is needed and long overdue. However, we are concerned about the mechanics of this bill to embed some of these requirements in the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS).

Currently ORS 447.231 provides direction to the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services to conform the state building code to the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Act and the regulations adopted thereunder.

- Section 2 (1) and (2) and Section 3 (1) (c) lines 8 - 22 references specific code standards as identified in the American National Standards Institute as in effect on the date of this legislation.

This proposal would lock in building code standards that are updated on a regular basis. Meaning that even routine administrative procedure updates would be dependent on future legislative action rather than agency need. We request the bill be amended to direct the Department of Consumer and Business Services to include these standards in administrative rule.



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- Section 2 (2) references multi-dwelling housing with three or more units.

The City of Portland has been working to support middle housing development for many years and builders are just figuring out how to build more of these housing types. We are hesitant in adding additional requirements at this time and request the unit threshold be lifted from 3 or more dwelling units to 5 or more dwelling units.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eric Engstrom, Interim Director



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