



HOUSING ALLIANCE

May 4, 2021

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

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Linthicum, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 2364A, which would make improvements to our laws that allow residents of manufactured home communities to purchase their parks.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

All Oregonians deserve a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them. People – our neighbors and members of our community – are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table, particularly during this pandemic.

Across Oregon, people with low incomes and seniors on fixed incomes live in manufactured home communities. Manufactured homes and the parks in which they are located have been a key source of affordable housing for many residents across Oregon. In total, there are over 62,000 manufactured homes in over 1,000 communities across Oregon.

Manufactured homes are often one of the last sources of affordable housing in communities, and these communities are home to seniors, people who experience disabilities, agricultural workers, and other people with low incomes. These communities are more than just affordable homes, but are communities.

Residents own their home, but rent the space their home resides on. Today's manufactured homes are not mobile, and residents have often sunk their savings into buying their homes. Since 2019, the increases that a landlord can give a tenant for their rent has been capped, but owners of manufactured homes in these communities may still find the increases to be unmanageable and unaffordable.

Over the past several years, the problems with investment firms purchasing manufactured home parks, and subsequent problems have been well documented by media sources, including Financial Times¹, Last Week Tonight with John Oliver², and most recently, the New Yorker³. These articles note that investment firms find parks to be an attractive investment because “*They see the parks as reliable sources of passive income—assets that generate steady returns and require little effort to maintain.*”⁴ Investor owners often bring challenges for the residents, including a lack of investment or money to maintain the park, and it may fall into disrepair, all while residents experience continued rent increases. As one testifier noted this morning, it helps when park owners see their tenants as human beings, and not just income.

One strategy is to purchase the park, either as a resident owned cooperative or as a non-profit or housing authority, in order to keep it affordable. In previous sessions, a law was passed which requires owners to notify residents of a sale, and give them the opportunity to purchase the park.

However, organizations that work either to purchase the park from owners to maintain it as affordable housing or residents who seek to form a cooperative in order to purchase the park note that the existing law doesn’t work as it should be, and that improvements are needed. HB 2364A would expand on previous work done to increase the opportunity to purchase parks and help them remain affordable.

We urge your support of HB 2364A. Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/3c87eb24-47a8-11ea-aee2-9ddbdc86190d>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCC8fPQOaxU>

³ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/03/15/what-happens-when-investment-firms-acquire-trailer-parks>

⁴ <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/03/15/what-happens-when-investment-firms-acquire-trailer-parks>

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
Business for a Better Portland
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
Chrisman Development
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
City of Forest Grove
City of Hillsboro
City of Hood River
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
College Housing Northwest
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Development Partners
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
DevNW
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Home Forward
Homes for Good
Housing Authorities of Oregon
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
Impact Northwest
Innovative Housing, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty
JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Oregon Cities
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Our Children Oregon
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Portland: Neighbors Welcome
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC) Oregon
Rogue Action Center
Rose CDC
St. Francis Shelter
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Think Real Estate
Transition Projects
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition