



Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislature

5 February 2024

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

The Community Action Partnership of Oregon writes in support of **Senate Bill 1537**. Oregon faces enormous housing production needs in the decade to come. At the current construction pace, the gap between supply and demand will grow wider over the coming years. SB 1537 provides both short and medium-term solutions to the growing housing deficits in Oregon, and recognizes the urgent need to build 440,000 housing units over the next 20 years. We believe that SB 1537 is a crucial step toward ensuring that all Oregonians have access to safe and affordable housing.

Our member Community Action Agencies have been fighting poverty and homelessness for sixty years. We are proud of our long history of housing and sheltering Oregonians in all 36 counties. We operate housing and shelters, fund many local partner agencies, and have prevented more than 100,000 Oregonians from losing their homes through the recent pandemic. We have also played a major role in the successful first year of the Governor's Emergency Order response to the homeless crisis, carrying the largest single share of the Governor's new housing and sheltering work across Oregon. Our network knows, however, that the first solution to our growing homeless crisis is building more affordable housing so that families can stay in their homes. That new construction must also be supported by a wave of supportive services funding that addresses the complexity of our homeless crisis, including more funding for behavioral health and substance treatment services, to keep people in their homes once housed. You can count on our support as you work to turn the tide on the most pressing social issue facing Oregon today.

The homeless crisis in Oregon has reached alarming proportions, affecting the lives of thousands of individuals and families. It is essential that we take immediate and effective action to address this issue. The goal of building 440,000 housing units over the next two decades is ambitious, but necessary, to provide stability to those who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Moreover, the proposed land use changes outlined in SB 1537 are important. These changes will facilitate the development of affordable housing in areas with access to essential services and transportation. By allowing for greater density and mixed-use zoning, we can create vibrant and sustainable communities while addressing the housing crisis.

To conclude, SB 1537 represents a significant step forward in tackling the homeless crisis and increasing the availability of affordable housing in Oregon. We will urge the legislature to support this bill and work toward its swift passage. The well-being and future of our fellow Oregonians depend on it. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue facing our communities, and for your dedication to making Oregon a place where everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home.

Respectfully,



Dan Brown
President



Jimmy Jones
Vice President for Legislative Affairs

CC: Taylor Smiley-Wolfe, Governor's Housing and Homelessness Initiative Director
Andrea Bell, Director Oregon Housing and Community Services