

Subject: Strong support of HB 2008

Greetings, Chair Fahey and Committee Members,

My name is rev. Sara Gross Samuelson and I live in Milwaukie and am the co-leader/pastor/organizer of Storyline Community as well as a lead organizer for the Clackamas Land and Housing Cohort, a member of the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition, a coalition of faith communities in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington County, leveraging our land and resources so that all Oregonians can come home.

I believe that housing is a human right and that my neighbors deserve a stable place to call home. I am also intimately aware of the way that the dissonance between wages and the cost of our all too short housing supply have created an uphill battle for many of my neighbors seeking a stable place to live. While my faith community does not own a building or land, we have connected ourselves to partner faith communities that do. There are over 600 acres of faith community property in Clackamas County alone. We have watched many of our colleagues in communities of faith who own land attempt to leverage that land to do good in our community, looking to provide shelter or attempt to even begin the investigation process into developing their land. These intentions towards positive change are met with regulations that not only make developing that land cost prohibitive, but invite a collection of public conversations and commentary that exclude our neighbors with lived experience in housing insecurity and our neighbors who have been systemically barred from access to fair housing through historically inequitable zoning codes and regulations. We desperately need access to housing for all our neighbors and we firmly believe that what we need is right here in our neighborhoods.... on the properties of faith communities ready to step in and get to work.

Your action is crucial. Please approve HB 2008 so that faith communities across the state of Oregon can build affordable housing on our land with as few barriers as possible.

Our neighbors need your help, creativity and support in leveraging every option and financing stream to begin solving the crisis of housing instability and homelessness in our city and county.

Sincerely,

Rev. Sara Gross Samuelson
sara@storylinecommunitypdx.org
503-367-7439