



March 22, 2023

RE: In support of House Bill 3309

Chair Dexter, Vice Chairs Helfrich and Gamba, and members of the committee,

My name is Matthew Serres, and I am the legal director at the Fair Housing Council of Oregon (FHCO). We are a private non-profit civil rights organization whose work is to end housing discrimination and ensure equal access to housing throughout Oregon. We write in support of HB 3309, because it will help to further fair housing by improving the quantity and quality of accessible housing units developed with state funds.

If HB 3309 is passed into law, it would bolster the number of accessible units in multifamily housing developed under the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) programs. The legislation proposes to do the following:

- Require OHCS to report on the number of dwelling units its funding produces that include accessibility features at each accessibility level established under Oregon state building codes.
- Commission a study by OHCS into the provision of accessible dwellings by type and unmet need.
- Call upon OHCS to incorporate incentives to increase the quantity and quality of accessible units whenever possible in housing developments it supports.
- Consider advice from persons with disabilities and disability service or advocacy organizations with respect to OHCS programs.

The state plays a key role in planning and producing accessible housing with government funds, and OHCS should be required to give consideration to incentives that fund accessible housing. By studying the provision of accessible dwelling units built with state funds and assessing unmet needs, the state will have a much clearer understanding of how to meet the needs of persons with disabilities in housing. The data collected will also help compliment the recently passed statewide land use planning revisions under HB 2001. Local jurisdictions will need more information about how state-funded housing developments across the state are planning for and producing accessible housing, in order to identify the right tools to fulfill local accessible housing needs. Lastly, input from the disability community is critical to ensuring that government funds are used wisely in the creation of accessible housing and the delivery of OHCS programs and services. More can be done in terms of how the state can increase the number of accessible units in publicly funded multifamily developments, and HB 3309 is an important step toward reducing that barrier to fair housing choice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Serres".

Matthew Serres
Legal Director
Fair Housing Council of Oregon

1221 SW Yamhill Street, Portland, Oregon 97205