

Submitter: James Roberts
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB974

Dear Senator Pham and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

As a founder of Bend YIMBY and as a steering committee member of the Partners for Affordable Housing coalition I am writing today to express my support for Senate Bill 974. We are all well aware of the the shortage of housing and soaring costs that are hurting families and harming our economic prosperity throughout Central Oregon and other parts of the state. Updating policies that reduce the time it takes to build housing will lead to an increase in both housing production and affordability.

Bend YIMBY and Partners for Affordable Housing coalition members hold a vision that housing will be available and affordable to everyone who wants or needs to live in Central Oregon. We are a diverse coalition of impacted people and organizations developing and sharing solutions that increase housing supply and lower housing costs. Supporting solutions like this - optimizing the housing production approval process - is a core mission of our organizations. We are grateful to the Legislature for bringing forward bills such as SB 974.

We specifically support the passage of SB 974 in order to: reduce the time it takes to bring housing units online; reduce the prohibitive costs incurred by lengthy approval processes, which are then passed on to homeowners and renters; improve affordability as supply is available more quickly to meet demand; increase production in order to provide more homeownership and rental opportunities; lower financial barriers to smaller and mid size developers.

I also wish to explicitly support the -1 Amendment to the bill introduced by Senator Anderson, which would also require engineering processes to be completed within 120 days. Currently jurisdictions, including many in Central Oregon, have no clock to ensure timely processing of applications. Ensuring housing applications are moving with deliberate speed is critical to lowering building costs and increasing supply. We encourage the inclusion of this amendment in the final bill.

Expediting the decision process for land use applications will increase housing supply and affordability. This will benefit our communities with a more sustainable future and more places for all Oregonians to call home. Thank you, again, for your leadership on this difficult challenge facing all of us.

Kind Regards,

James Roberts
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