



Submitter: Ramon A. Hernandez

Committee: House Committee on Housing and Development

Measure: SB 1537

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

I want to thank you all for what you do in communities across Oregon helping children, adults, and families with their proper housing needs. My name is Ramon Alexander Hernandez and I am here representing (MWVCAA) Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency as the Community Engagement Specialist. At our agency we are committed to serving urban and rural communities by advocating for policies and reforms which aim to provide efficient and sustainable housing solutions. I write to you today urging support for SB 1537, which will address the statewide housing crisis by creating reasonable and measurable policies that will make state housing development more procedurally efficient as well as productive. At the moment our state is in need of 140,000 housing units to meet our population needs. We owe these essential investments and fundamental policy changes in SB 1537 to our future generations of Oregonians.

SB 1537 will help lay the groundwork for...

- Providing funds for sustainable and equitable housing developments in metro as well as rural communities.
 - Creating a Housing Accountability & Production office that will act as a mediator to enforce and review housing laws, expediting the development process.
 - One-time Urban Growth Boundary policy option for eligible communities in desperate need of affordable housing to live in and commute from.
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- Establishing land use policy changes for more efficient production of affordable, diverse, and equitable housing options.

At our agency we support securing an equitable solution when it comes to addressing Oregon's housing emergency, and also providing opportunities for populations currently experiencing housing instability and homelessness. Research points to the cost of housing being an indicator of homelessness rates across our cities. The shortage of supply makes housing prices rise way out of reach for ordinary Oregonians on a low-median income. According to the Regional Housing Needs Analysis (RHNA) the state of Oregon will need to build 440,000 new homes over the next 20 years if we hope to grow sustainably, and keep up with housing demand. The policies in this bill will make it so we engage with this issue and take effective action against the numerous challenges cities, developers, and families in Oregon are facing when trying to create and sustain affordable housing developments. To pass SB 1537 would mean taking action now, addressing housing affordability and supply, supporting modern energy-efficient developments and creating housing accountability standards for our state to use and apply in the future.

I want to thank you all for the time and consideration,

Be well.

Ramon A, Hernandez

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency