

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

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

I am a member of the Partners for Affordable Housing coalition and am writing today to express my support for Senate Bill 974. A lack of housing and soaring costs are hurting families and harming our economic prosperity throughout Central Oregon. Updating policies that reduce the time it takes to build housing will lead to an increase in both housing production and affordability.

Partners for Affordable Housing coalition members share a vision that housing will be available and affordable to everyone. We are a diverse coalition of impacted people and organizations developing and educating on bold 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 organization. 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 from land use to planning to engineering to construction to move-in.

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.

Eliminate barriers to development.

Draw down the housing deficit of hundreds of thousands of units.

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 us all.

Kindly,
Rick Russell

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