



May 11, 2023

House Committee on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Dexter, Vice Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Loren Naldoza and I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for SB 892A, which would make several changes to the law governing the Oregon Housing & Community Services Department (OHCS).

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of one hundred organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built. We represent a diverse set of voices including affordable housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state. We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Over the past few years in Oregon, we have experienced crisis upon crisis. Oregonians have lost their jobs, lost loved ones, and have lost housing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and similar tragedy strikes our state seasonally as families across the state lose their homes, livelihoods, and loved ones to wildfires, including the 2020 Labor Day Fires.

Over the course of addressing these emergencies over the last few years, OHCS as an administrative agency has grown and changed in fundamental ways, in part by addressing these emergencies. As a consequence of this growth and change, the laws that govern the department and its officers simply needs fine-tuning. This can be done by reassessing rulemaking and procurement processes, as well as the Housing Stability Council's roles in both of these areas.

These are meaningful changes that allow OHCS to act quickly in light of urgent events, and hopefully without running into statutory barriers. As you all may have heard, despite the fact we are only in the first half of May, we are seeing a preposterously early fire season beginning, with higher-than-normal temperatures, and nearly 100 active wildfires as close as Alberta, Canada. We have a chance before the Legislature adjourns sine die to make these changes in SB 892A, and ensure that OHCS is as equipped as it can be to address what could be another difficult wildfire season.

Thank you,

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On behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

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