

Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson and members of the committee—

My name is Stephanie Hooper, and I represent AGE+, a statewide nonprofit that works with communities across Oregon to strengthen systems that support older adults and those who care for them. Our work focuses on aging expertise, innovation, and policy strategies that help Oregon respond to a profound demographic shift already underway.

Oregon now has the oldest population in the western United States. In 2000, there were half as many older adults as children in our state. Today, older Oregonians outnumber children. The Oregon Office of Economic Analysis has described this as a “massive demographic structural change.” This is not a future concern—it is already reshaping housing demand across Oregon.

The effects are most visible in rural and small communities, where older adults make up the largest share of the population and housing options are the most limited. Older adults living on fixed incomes face rising rents, shrinking availability of low-cost units, and waitlists that are often years long. Vacancies are rare, and many older adults are forced to choose between paying for housing, food, or healthcare.

At the same time, much of Oregon’s existing housing stock was not designed to support aging safely and independently. Housing production has not kept pace with the speed or scale of our demographic change. Homes lack basic accessibility features, and suitable alternatives are often unavailable or unaffordable. As a result, older adults who want to remain in their communities frequently have no viable housing options.

To meet the demands of an aging population, Oregon must expand the ways cities can respond—by removing barriers, incentivizing innovative housing models, and allowing modest-scale, accessible housing to be added where people already live.

HB4082 is a step toward however we must have a comprehensive plan that addresses our demographic reality not just in housing but across sectors.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Stephanie Hooper, CEO

AGE+