



March 17, 2025

Senator Khanh Pham
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Street Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson and Committee members,
On behalf of the Bend Chamber and our 1,750 members and 8,500 local and regional businesses, we are pleased to submit testimony in support of SB 974: Relating to the timeline for reviewing land use applications for housing. Since 2022, we have prioritized advocacy efforts to address our community's housing challenges, with a keen focus on workforce housing and local infrastructure investments.

As you know, Oregon is facing one of the most constrained housing markets in the country. Here in Central Oregon, the issue is particularly acute. Bend continues to see significant population and job growth, yet housing production has not kept pace. The rising cost of living, exacerbated by long permitting delays and regulatory hurdles, has made it difficult for workers—including teachers, healthcare professionals, service workers, and first responders—to afford to live in the community where they work.

Businesses across Bend struggle to hire and retain employees due to the lack of affordable workforce housing. This challenge affects our entire economy, from small businesses to large employers, and puts additional strain on transportation infrastructure as more workers are forced to commute long distances to find housing they can afford. Without urgent action, these pressures will only worsen, further restricting business growth and economic opportunities in our region.

SB 974 and the -1 amendment offer a practical and immediate solution by requiring cities and counties to process land use applications faster, reducing approval timelines to 45 days for single-family homes and 100 days for affordable multifamily housing. This reform will help unlock housing supply and reduce unnecessary delays that drive up construction costs. Additionally, the bill ensures greater predictability for housing developers, helping them plan and complete projects that directly support our workforce. Given the uncertainty of federal economic policy and the impacts of tariffs on construction materials, predictability and timeliness are key to a project moving forward.

The Bend Chamber believes that solving our housing crisis is essential to our economic future. We strongly encourage the Senate Housing and Development Committee to continue working with stakeholders to pass SB 974 and take meaningful action to address the housing challenges facing Bend and communities across Oregon.

Regards,
Sara Odendahl
Director of Government Affairs & Strategic Initiatives
Bend Chamber of Commerce