

June 17, 2021

Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court St NE Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for Stevens Road Housing Proposal - House Bill 3318

Dear Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee:

Board of Directors

Bruce Abernethy (Board Chair)
Former Bend City Councilor, former Health Council Housing Workgroup Chair

Gary Weltmann (Treasurer)
CPA, Pacific Accountancy, LLC

Amanda Lenke (Secretary)
Former Chair of Bend's Community Center

Monica Desmond
CSEC Response Team Coordinator,
J Bar J

Rodger Moore
General Manager, EPIC Property Management

Dr. George Conway
Director, Deschutes County Health Services

Elaine Knobbs-Seasholtz
Director, Strategy and Development,
Mosaic Medical

Shimiko Montgomery
Executive Director, Central Oregon Health Quality Alliance

Michael Rogers
VP, CRA Officer, Heritage Bank

Talena Barker
Vice President, Leadership Development,
Bend Chamber

Colleen Sinsky, MSW (Staff)
FUSE Program Manager

Central Oregon FUSE is a nonprofit organization working to address our region's growing homelessness crisis by developing supportive, affordable housing for people living with disabilities. Central Oregon's shortage of affordable housing units leaves these community members stranded outside in survival mode, and will increasingly threaten our agency's ability to hire and retain qualified staff. FUSE, like partner nonprofit agencies across the region, currently has access to federal rental subsidy and hundreds of unhoused clients in need, but the lack of available units means that we're at risk of being unable to spend this federal resource. This proposal is a significant and creative investment into developing the types of housing units that promote a healthy, diverse community and will allow us to leverage important federal funds into ending homelessness in Bend.

We join the Bend City Council in their strong support of House Bill 3318 and applaud efforts to integrate deeply affordable housing into the overall community design. This proposal allows the creation of 600-800 housing units that will promote economic stability for our local working families and for our community. Homelessness prevention starts with kids having a safe and stable place to call home, but decades of underproduction have made this impossible for many local families. FUSE supports innovative solutions like HB 3318 to promote the development of "missing middle" housing units to address a root cause of homelessness and economic insecurity. We look forward to working with our partners to leverage resources into developing affordable, supportive housing units that are critically needed in Central Oregon.

Sincerely,



Bruce Abernethy
FUSE Board Chair



Monica Desmond
FUSE Board Member



Our mission: Central Oregon FUSE mobilizes resources to provide housing and supportive services for people experiencing long-term homelessness to improve community health, safety and stability.