

Testimony of in Support of House Bill 2316A | Rep B. Levy

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

HB 2316A creates the Home Start Lands program, allowing underutilized state-owned land within urban growth boundaries to be designated for affordable housing development. It also establishes a framework for local governments to nominate eligible lands, offers property tax exemptions, and ensures these lands are developed for the benefit of low- and moderate-income families, whether through homeownership or rental housing.

What makes this bill particularly important for rural Oregon is that it creates flexibility. Local governments and housing providers in smaller communities often struggle to assemble land, secure infrastructure, and navigate zoning challenges for housing projects. By streamlining the land designation process and making real property assets available through leases or sales tied to affordability covenants, HB 2316A opens the door to housing that truly meets the needs of rural families.

This legislation also recognizes the reality that not all communities have the same resources. By authorizing grants and loans from the newly established Home Start Lands Fund, HB 2316A can help ensure infrastructure is in place—something that is often a major barrier to rural development. Whether it's sewer lines, road access, or water hookups, the bill gives the state tools to assist in site preparation and infrastructure build-out, which are critical for bringing projects to life outside metro areas.

Additionally, the bill includes clear standards and timelines for land use decisions, making the process more predictable and accessible for local leaders and developers alike. It doesn't remove local control—it encourages local participation, while reinforcing transparency and accountability.

In short, HB 2316A empowers communities, unlocks land for housing, and provides a path forward for meaningful, affordable development—not just in our cities, but in rural Oregon too.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 2316A.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby Levy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Bobby" on top and "Levy" below it, both written in a single continuous line.

Representative Bobby Levy, House District 58