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*Sheila Stiley – NW Coastal Housing*

**February 5, 2025**

**Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Kevin Cronin, and I serve as the Director of Policy and Advocacy at Housing Oregon. We are a statewide coalition representing over 120 mission-based organizations dedicated to ensuring every Oregonian has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. Our members develop and manage affordable rental housing, support affordable homeownership opportunities, and provide essential homeless services across the state.

I write today in strong support of Senate Bill 444, which will expand access to inclusive and accessible housing for Oregonians with disabilities. Housing Oregon recently completed our endorsement process for legislative bills, and our housing developer members voted to support this important legislation.

This bill seeks to address the severe unmet need for accessible housing in Oregon. The housing needs of people with disabilities have never been fully met. One in four people has a disability, and one in eight people have difficulties walking, yet only one in 100 housing units are estimated to be accessible. SB 444 directly addresses this gap in three key ways:

1. Requiring 10% of housing built with state funds to comply with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS);
2. Increasing building code requirements for Type A units (Oregon's most accessible unit type) to 10% of units in buildings with 10 or more units; and
3. Expanding the Fair Housing Act's design and construction requirements to include triplexes, ensuring that smaller-scale housing developments meet accessibility standards.

At Housing Oregon, we recognize that ensuring accessible housing is critical for both people with disabilities and older adults—Oregon's fastest-growing demographic at risk of homelessness. As our population ages, the demand for accessible housing will only increase, and SB 444 is a proactive step to meet this need.

Each year, Housing Oregon hosts an annual conference in Portland, attended by roughly 1,000 housing professionals. For the past several years, we have dedicated a track specifically to housing for people with disabilities, recognizing that accessible, inclusive, and supportive housing is critical to ensuring long-term stability for many Oregonians. Before stepping into my current role, I had the opportunity to engage with this community firsthand, and I've been consistently impressed by the architects, developers, and service providers who are leading the way in addressing these needs.

A strong example of this work is [Wynne Watts Commons](#), a 150-unit affordable housing project by Albertina Kerr, which includes 30 universally accessible units designed specifically for people with disabilities. This project also integrates Net Zero design strategies, demonstrating how accessibility and sustainability can work together to serve vulnerable populations. An example of this in Sen. Nash's district is [Pendleton South Hill Commons](#), by Horizon Project and Carleton Hart Architecture.

Beyond those projects, [Bora Architecture](#), [Pinnacle Architecture](#), and others have been at the forefront of trauma-informed design and the development of housing tailored to people with disabilities. Their leadership has helped shape best practices that prioritize safety, dignity, and accessibility.

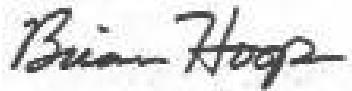
At Housing Oregon, we have also partnered with the Kuni Foundation to present the Kuni Foundation Innovation Award for Inclusive Housing, recognizing groundbreaking work in creating accessible and supportive housing. Last year, we honored Community Vision for [their efforts in developing](#) affordable, accessible, and environmentally sustainable [ADUs \(Accessory Dwelling Units\)](#).

The need for Senate Bill 444 is clear. If passed, this bill will not only increase housing opportunities for people living with disabilities but also help Oregon's aging population remain housed with dignity.

I want to thank the Committee for your dedication to seeking solutions to Oregon's affordable housing and homelessness crises. SB 444 is an important step toward ensuring that all Oregonians, regardless of ability, have access to stable, affordable, and accessible housing. I urge your support.

**Sincerely,**  
**Kevin Cronin**  
Director, Policy and Advocacy  
Housing Oregon  
[kevin@housingoregon.org](mailto:kevin@housingoregon.org)  
[www.housingoregon.org](http://www.housingoregon.org)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Hoop". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Brian" on top and "Hoop" below it.

Brian Hoop  
Executive Director  
Housing Oregon