

April 25, 2023

Senate Committee on Housing & Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB406

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson and members of the Committee:

As an appointed member of the Tillamook County Housing Commission (TCHC), I am writing this letter in support of SB406, to allow Tillamook County to serve as a pilot project to implement the recommendations of the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis Recommendations Report: Leading with Production (OHNARP).

In addition to serving as one of two large employer representatives on the TCHC, I also serve as the coordinator for a community coalition made up of volunteers and leaders from across all sectors. Members of this coalition have worked collectively since 2015 to improve upstream factors affecting health and well-being in Tillamook County. Our County Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) data for 2022, indicated Housing as a top priority affecting health outcomes in our service area. The other two priority areas identified were Economic Stability and Access to Care, both of which stand to be improved with increased affordable and workforce housing options for local residents. This bill will help us achieve those goals.

Based on Tillamook County's Housing Needs Analysis, Tillamook County has a 1% vacancy rate. Lack of housing is impacting workforce recruitment and causing significant economic challenges for businesses, especially those serving our explosive tourism industry. People want to live and work in our communities but become discouraged and often withdraw their applications for work once they are unable to secure housing. Employers are going to extreme measures and exorbitant expense to ensure housing for skilled labor. It is unsustainable.

There have been many proactive and collaborative efforts in Tillamook County to address our housing crisis. While we are making progress, much more needs to happen as quickly as possible. I respectfully request your full support of SB406.

Sincerely,

Michelle Jenck, M.Ed.
Netarts, Oregon