



MULTIFAMILY NW

The Association Promoting Quality Rental Housing

Oregon Senate Committee on Housing and Development
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Gary Fisher
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RE: Concerns with SB 444

Feb. 2, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this legislation. Multifamily NW has strong concerns about SB 444, as it would establish one of the strictest residential accessibility building code standards in the country, significantly increasing development costs and discouraging new housing construction at a time when we need to do the exact opposite.

Multifamily NW is the largest association of housing providers in the state, representing nearly 300,000 units and every profession related to the industry — from property managers and owners to landscapers, maintenance professionals and screening companies. Our top priority is to collaborate with public sector leaders to identify and implement proven solutions to Oregon's ongoing housing crisis.

We also have concerns with this bill because it would prohibit Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) from funding any new subsidized rental housing development unless it meets these highly restrictive standards, further limiting the production of affordable housing.

Under SB 444, at least 10 percent of the dwelling units or sleeping units in Group R-2 buildings, or at least one dwelling unit or sleeping unit in a building with more than 10 units, must be Type A dwelling units or sleeping units as defined by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A117.1. Additionally, all multifamily housing with three or more dwelling units or sleeping units would be required to meet accessibility requirements under the Fair Housing Act, mandating compliance with Type B dwelling unit standards under ANSI A117.1.

However, all housing is already required to be built to Fair Housing Act standards, making this bill duplicative and unnecessarily burdensome on developers.

For subsidized developments, the bill imposes even more stringent thresholds under the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards for Visitability and Blind and Deaf Communications, based on the number of units in a multifamily development. Current federal law for subsidized residential developments requires that 5%, or at least one unit, meet accessibility standards — typically incorporating both Type A and Type B dwelling requirements under ADA and FHA guidelines. To our knowledge, SB 444 would effectively double the accessibility standard for subsidized affordable housing development, creating substantial financial burdens that could reduce the viability of these projects.

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We urge the Legislature to reconsider SB 444, as it would place an undue burden on housing developers, restrict much-needed housing supply, and make it more difficult to address Oregon's housing crisis. While accessibility in housing is essential, these extreme requirements risk reducing the overall availability of housing at a time when we need to be increasing supply. We encourage policymakers to pursue balanced solutions that expand accessibility without jeopardizing housing development across the state.

Sincerely,

Zach Lindahl
Director of Government Affairs