



VANESSA CORNWALL

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DATE: February 5, 2026
TO: House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
FROM: Vanessa Cornwall, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Officer
RE: HB 4037, Relating to Housing

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

I write in strong support of HB 4037, specifically Sections 17-19. This bill will help rural communities across Oregon ease a persistent and growing housing supply gap by addressing complex, inconsistent, and unpredictable permitting procedures.

We want to sincerely thank Representative Marsh for including this language, and then Speaker Fahey and her staff, Governor Kotek and her staff, and various state agencies for their partnership with Lane County and the University of Oregon's School of Planning, Public Policy and Management—known as 3PM.

This language comes directly from a two-day convening of 75 local, rural, and community stakeholders at the Inspire Oregon Housing Incubator, co-hosted by Lane County and 3PM. It reflects real-world experience with what is slowing housing production across rural Oregon.

Rural communities face a persistent housing shortage, worsened by complex and inconsistent permitting. Notice requirements, discretionary reviews, and appeals routinely undermine housing that should be allowed “by right.”

This language ensures local governments apply clear, objective standards and eliminates ambiguous criteria that cause delays and raise costs. By limiting hearings and appeals while preserving neighbor notice and applicant rights, it makes approvals predictable and fair—helping Oregon meet its housing goals.

I do want to acknowledge the -6 amendment adds detailed notice rules and limits appeals to applicants. While we prefer the base bill’s stronger mandate for outright permitting, the amendment still reflects the core of our goals: clarity, reduced barriers, and applicant control. It’s a step forward in preventing housing from being stalled by subjective standards.

This bill—whether in its original form or as amended—moves Oregon toward a more efficient, equitable housing approval system. We urge your support.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OFFICER