

CITY OF NEWPORT

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February 6, 2024

The Honorable Maxine Dexter, Chair
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St. NE, H-283
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HB 4134: Housing Oregon's Workforce

Chair Dexter,

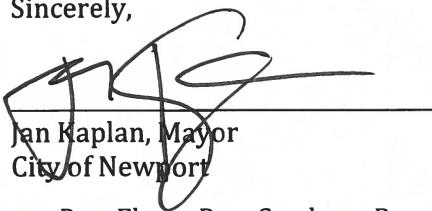
The City of Newport would like to express its whole hearted support for House Bill 4134, Housing Oregon's Workforce, and its appreciation of the efforts of chief sponsors, Representatives Elmer and Gomberg, and other sponsors of the bill who have made this legislation a reality.

Securing affordable housing in Newport has always been a challenge, but in recent years it has been even more so. Construction costs continue to increase, and land available for development is often constrained by terrain or wetlands. While Newport is blessed with a diverse and growing economy, a strong tourism base, and a coastal climate and experience that is highly attractive to retirees, these factors also place additional strains on the supply of available housing in our community.

As a City, we have taken numerous steps to facilitate construction of new housing at various price points, and have seen the pace of housing construction accelerate in recent years to more than twice our historical average. It is still not enough to meet demand. Capacity limitations in the City's wastewater system and inadequate access, is holding at least one significant multi-family project from moving forward, and financial contributions from the City and developer are not enough to close that gap. That is why this bill is so important to us. If this legislation is passed, then the resulting \$875,000 in infrastructure funding will allow us to address these infrastructure deficiencies, so that at least 90 urgently needed market-rate apartment units can be built. The project is shovel-ready, and the developer is prepared to move forward with a schedule where the new units would be available to our local workforce in 2025, well in advance of the 60 month deadline set in the bill. They have also assured us that at least 30 percent of the rental units will be held at price points affordable to households at or below 130% of area median income.

We applaud this bipartisan and bicameral response to provide infrastructure funding to meet workforce housing needs in rural Oregon, and see it as complimenting other housing related legislation that is being considered this session. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Jan Kaplan, Mayor
City of Newport

xc: Rep. Elmer, Rep. Gomberg, Rep. Boice, Rep. Conrad, Rep. Hartman, Sen. Boquist, Sen. Knopp, Sen. Meek, Sen. Patterson, and Senator Smith