

February 8, 2024

To: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Re: Support for Senate Bill 1537

Dear Chair Jama and Members of the Committee,

Portland Housing Center calls on you to support Senate Bill 1537, which will address Oregon's urgent need to increase housing supply and affordability statewide.

Currently, Oregon is short 140,000 housing units and will need to produce over 400,000 more over the next 20 years to keep up with demand. This lack of housing stock has caused a terrible housing crisis throughout the state, making stable housing out of reach for too many Oregonians. We have to act now to make up for decades of underbuilding housing of all types, across all affordability levels. Research shows that the cost of housing is directly tied to rates of homelessness and housing shortages drive up prices. We have to build more housing to solve the homelessness crisis.

SB 1537 will provide cities and housing developers with a number of tools to streamline the development process to boost housing production statewide. It includes a \$500 million investment package from existing state resources to unlock more housing production by providing funding to build core infrastructure like water and sewer to support new housing development, plus funding for moderate income housing. It also includes four land use changes to facilitate increased housing production, including an optional one-time expansion of urban growth boundaries to add land for housing. Within the expansion areas, 30% of all housing units must be affordable housing, making it one of the strongest affordable housing requirements in the US.

This bill was refined after a seven-month process that involved a strong coalition of affordable housing organizations, building officials, cities, conservation groups, agriculture groups, housing authorities, and housing developers. Together, we call on this committee to join us in supporting a housing bill that will finally make an impact on our collective housing crisis.

Sincerely,



Laura Bower
IDA Program Manager

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