



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

February 4, 2021

Representative Julie Fahey, Chair
House Committee on Housing
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Deschutes County Support for HB 2705 & HB 2778 – Rural Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Dear Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 2705 and HB 2778 to allow rural accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on behalf of the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners (Board).

The Board strongly supports rural ADU legislation and respectfully encourages the 2021 Legislature to approve measures to increase housing supply. As you know, Deschutes County is Oregon's fastest growing county. The demand for all types of housing in our region has only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. We face a critical shortage of affordable housing for our growing population. Rural ADUs are an important option to address our region's growing housing needs.

Rural ADU legislation would allow Deschutes County to:

- Provide housing without significant public resources;
- Increase the supply of rental, supportive and multigenerational housing;
- Legalize some existing, unpermitted second dwelling units; and
- Increase the affordability of housing by allowing property owners to purchase or maintain a home with rental income from the ADU or from the primary dwelling if living in the ADU.

The Board encourages the Committee to provide local control to counties to determine development standards and limitations governing ADUs. While Deschutes County supports more local control than drafted in HB 2705, the proposed standards are workable and address issues of statewide interest. HB 2778 provides appropriate local control for historic homes built prior to 1974.

The Board understands that in other parts of our state, there has been concern that allowing rural ADUs will negatively impact the rural nature of Oregon's farmland. That is not the case in Deschutes County. We have a large number of rural residential zoned properties not connected to farm use and in close proximity to our cities and unincorporated communities.

The legislation also implements Deschutes County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2011, Policy 3.3.5 by allowing ADUs in Rural Residential Zones:

Maintain the rural character of the County while ensuring a diversity of housing opportunities, including initiating discussions to amend State Statutes and/or Oregon Administrative Rules to permit accessory dwelling units in... Rural Residential Zones.

Substantial support for rural ADUs exists in Deschutes County. Allowing rural ADUs would be a valuable tool in helping us alleviate the housing shortage we are currently experiencing and expect to face for many years ahead.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact me by phone at 541-385-1708 or by email at Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org.

Sincerely,



Nick Lelack, AICP, Director

c: Deschutes County Board of Commissioners
Members of the House Committee on Housing
Senators Lynn Findley, Tim Knopp, and Dennis Linthicum
Representatives Daniel Bonham, Jason Kropf, Vikki Breese Iverson, and Jack Zika