

Office of Sustainability



February 7, 2022

Senate Housing and Development Committee
900 Court St. NE - HR
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 1537 - Relating to Housing Cost Impact Statements

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of SB 1537. Multnomah County is deeply committed to housing justice for our community members, and recognizes the profound challenges our community members face in finding quality affordable housing. We are eager to continue to work with the legislature and the many stakeholders involved to advance shared solutions to this challenge. It is unclear, however, how SB 1537's cumbersome duplication of existing cost effectiveness methods will address the challenge of housing affordability.

Multnomah County is committed to centering the voices of impacted communities in the solutions to the challenges that they face. Irrespective of intentions, we cannot assume to understand how best to address community challenges, including housing displacement and affordability, without those most impacted at the table. It is our understanding that this deep engagement has not taken place as part of the development of SB 1537, and we do not see how it would be possible to do so during the short session. If this is incorrect, we are eager to learn more about the collaborative process that resulted in this bill.

We urge you to delay any consideration of SB 1537 until there is a clear process for how impacted communities will be centered in the conversation, and that the substantial and burdensome impacts of the bill will improve housing affordability. We also urge the bill author's to consult with local governments, whose powers would be curtailed by this legislation, but who have the best insights on how to work with the community to address the real issues of housing affordability and displacement.

Sincerely,

John Wasiutynski, Director
Multnomah County Office of Sustainability