

Submitter: Eric Thompson
On Behalf Of: Middle Housing Homebuilders
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

My company, Oregon Homeworks, has been building homes in the Portland Metro area for ~20 years. The vast majority of that time was focused on building larger/expensive single family homes in Portland's close-in neighborhoods, which were certainly not homes that the vast majority of Oregonians could afford to purchase. With the deployment of the statewide Middle Housing code and Portland's implementation of it, we have pivoted our business to focus solely on building middle housing homes (ADUs, plexes, cottage clusters) and have delivered close to 100 of these smaller, more attainable homes.

Most of our buyers are first-time homeowners, who have told us that these new middle housing options are in many cases the only homes that they can afford in the neighborhoods that they want to be in, especially given the tight supply of homes throughout our state and the elevated mortgage rates that now exist. I applaud the State and Portland for having the vision to allow this type of development to exist.

We have, however, uncovered a variety of hurdles in the code as written that restrict our efforts to build more attainable housing and assist the State in achieving its housing production goals. HB2138 does an outstanding job of removing many of those hurdles that exist and will result in more housing of all types throughout the State. We are in particular support of (1) allowing middle housing to be any combination of attached or detached structures, (2) simplifying middle housing land divisions, (3) overriding bans on middle housing and ADUs in certain HOAs, (4) removing courtyard requirements for certain cottage cluster developments, and especially (5) creating a state-defined SDC schedule that would result in a slide scale with lower fees for smaller middle housing homes.

Thank you,

Eric Thompson
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