

Submitter: Ian Meisner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB684

In my view, SB 684 represents several key components of good policy making:

- It represents fiscal responsibility, by relying on a self-replenishing revolving loan fund that won't require future capitalization.
- It represents a willingness to learn from our peers, by adopting a proven model and tailoring it to the Oregon context.
- It represents an understanding of the market dynamic that it's intending to mitigate--that we have a housing shortage, especially of affordable and middle-income housing, and the state should play a key role in increasing housing supply.
- Lastly, it represents an opportunity for further innovation—to leverage the tools available through state and local public finance to deliver real results for our communities.

Our State and Local funding sources for affordable housing are consistently fully subscribed. In the Portland Metro area, there is a sense that voters don't have an appetite for additional local affordable housing bonds. Recent data on permitting and housing starts paint a bleak picture of how our communities are faring in relation to their stated production goals. It's clear now more than ever, we need new mechanisms for housing development at all levels of income that are insulated from resource scarcity and a volatile interest rate environment. While successful program implementation will require time and iterative improvement in collaboration with our state housing finance agency, public housing authorities, taxing jurisdictions, and private sector stakeholders, it is imperative that we take this first step towards adding a new tool to the toolbox.