



February 7, 2024

Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development;

I am writing on behalf of the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce to express our **enthusiastic support for the Governor's Housing Production Plan**, SB 1537, in the 2024 Legislative Session. Our chamber represents a diverse array of over 1200 businesses in the Eugene and surrounding area, and we have a vested interest in the community's well-being and a thriving economy. This plan aligns perfectly with the Eugene Chamber's priority strategic initiative related to housing.

The Eugene Chamber has been actively engaged in working to tackle the complex challenges stemming from a lack of adequate housing, as evidenced by our State of Homelessness Report released in 2021 and our ongoing Homeless Initiative which launched in 2022. It is strongly evidenced that a key component to addressing our homelessness crisis, lies with addressing the problem that we must first solve, ensuring enough places and spaces for people to call home.

Eugene, Oregon boasts the tightest housing market in the U.S. while simultaneously grappling with the highest rate of homelessness per capita. As a business organization deeply committed to the prosperity and well-being of our community, we understand the critical connection between housing availability and economic stability. This understanding has been a driving force behind our engagement in addressing our housing needs, as evidenced by our Homelessness Initiative.

The General Housing Production Points outlined in SB 1537 highlight the urgent need for action. Oregon is currently behind by 140,000 housing units, and we must act now to make up for decades of underbuilding. There is too little housing available for seniors or individuals with low- and moderate-incomes, exacerbating the affordability crisis across the state.

The link between housing availability and our homelessness crisis cannot be overstated. Research shows that rates of homelessness are directly linked to the cost of housing, and we must build more housing to effectively address this issue.

SB 1537 addresses these challenges head-on with several key provisions. The Affordable Housing Provision, which provides that 30% of all housing units in expansion areas be legally restricted for affordable housing, is a crucial step toward ensuring guaranteed affordability.



The establishment of a Housing Production Financial Assistance office will provide much-needed support for housing production, while land use tools and targeted design and development flexibilities will streamline processes and save time and money for cities and developers.

This bill represents a comprehensive and collaborative approach to addressing Oregon's housing crisis. It has been refined over a seven-month process involving various stakeholders, reflecting the diverse needs and perspectives of our communities.

In conclusion, **we urge your strong support for SB 1537**. By working together and implementing these critical reforms, we can make significant strides toward ensuring that all Oregonians have access to safe, affordable housing.

Thank you for considering our testimony and for your dedication to addressing this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brittany Quick-Warner".

Brittany Quick-Warner
President & CEO, Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
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