



MULTIFAMILY NW

The Association Promoting Quality Rental Housing

Oregon Senate Committee on Housing & Development
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 1537

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gary Fisher

gary@multifamilynw.org

Feb. 5, 2024

Chair Jama, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in strong support of SB 1537, which represents a significant and effective step toward alleviating Oregon's housing crisis.

Multifamily NW is the largest association of housing providers in the state, with nearly 1,000 members collectively managing more than 275,000 units throughout Oregon and southwest Washington. Our association advocates for common sense public policy with one goal in mind: Keeping Oregonians housed.

The lack of housing supply at all levels of affordability in Oregon has contributed to rising rents, lack of vacancy, and other factors that have real impacts on Oregon families. Multifamily NW members have appreciated the Governor's focus on housing production since she took office — and recognize that her goal of 36,000 new units per year will not be met unless the Legislature takes bold action right now. This is our opportunity to course-correct after years of policies that have hindered housing development despite a growing population.

Oregon is ranked one of the highest states in the country for underproduction of housing. Our state economists estimate that we will need upwards of 440,000 new units in the next 20 years to keep up with demand. This proposal represents a balanced approach that considers environmental impacts while prioritizing housing stability for all Oregonians.

This bill marks an important shift in how we look at Oregon's land use system; a system that has worked well in many regards, but has disincentivized housing development for decades. We recognize and understand the concerns that opponents of this bill have raised regarding permanent changes to the land use system. However, our association remains strongly supportive of the entirety of the bill with the understanding that these are one-time Urban Growth Boundary expansions are for a single purpose, and that they have several requirements attached to them.

Additionally, we hope that the new Housing Accountability and Production Office will be empowered to help developers navigate the myriad regulations and public processes at the city, county, and regional levels of government. A centralized place for homebuilders, financial institutions, property owners, and other stakeholders to find resources and assistance will be key to any successful effort.

It is past time to act like this is the crisis that it is. Thank you for your consideration of our perspective and we encourage you to join our association in support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Gary Fisher
Executive Director

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