



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

February 5, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development

Re: SB 444

Position: Support

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of SB 444, on behalf of the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association.

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) is a nonprofit professional membership organization of over 800 planners and those who work with planning in formulating and implementing development and conservation policies at the state and local level. OAPA works to create sustainable and vibrant Oregon communities through professional development, advocacy for sound planning, providing resources to meet the challenges of growth and change, and embracing and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity.

OAPA supports SB 444 to conform state building code to accessibility requirements under the Fair Housing Act and to certain American National Standards Institute standards for housing accessibility.

An OAPA legislative priority is to address the housing supply and housing affordability crisis. Our advocacy aims to address the housing crisis comprehensively to ensure that all Oregonians have access to safe, stable, and affordable housing choices for Oregonians statewide.

The US Census Bureau estimates that 15% of Oregonians have disabilities, the building codes require accessibility features in just 2% of units. The standard does not facilitate fair and equitable access to housing opportunities. A lack of accessible

housing diversity forces many residents experiencing disabilities and older adults to live in housing that doesn't meet their needs.

SB 444 seeks to address the severe under supply of accessible residential rental units in communities across Oregon in three ways:

1. Require 10% of housing built with State funds to comply with Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).
2. Increases building code requirements for Type A units among all residential housing to 10%.
3. Decrease to three the number of units in a project that triggers Fair Housing design and construction requirements.

Planners and code officers will be tasked to implement these new requirements at the local level. The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association supports SB 444 to foster social equity with emphasis on creating more resilient and adaptable people and places today and for a more sustainable future; and creating great communities for all.

Thank you for considering OAPA's testimony on SB 444.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Harker

Chair, Legislative and Policy Affairs Committee
Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association
www.oregonapa.org