

Greetings, Chair Fahey and Committee Members,

My name is Maria McDowell. I am the Rector of St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, in Portland, Oregon. We are participants in the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition, a coalition of faith communities throughout Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties, leveraging our land and resources so that all Oregonians can come home.

At St. Philip, we are working with neighborhood organizations to build almost 140 units of affordable housing for displaced seniors. The parishioners of St. Philip, as the second black church in Portland, know what it is to be displaced from their homes, whether by flooding, discriminatory city funding, or unfair mortgage practices. We are overjoyed to be able to welcome our elders home. The passing of the Expanding Opportunities for Affordable Housing program by the Portland City Council lifted significant barriers that we face as a small, land-rich but time and cash-poor community of faith trying to build affordable housing.

Your action is crucial. Please approve the HB 2008 so that other faith communities across the state of Oregon can build affordable housing on their land with as few barriers as possible.

Our neighbors need your help, creativity, and support in leveraging every option and financing stream to begin solving the crisis of housing instability and homelessness in our city, county and state.

Thank you for your work on behalf of our neighbors,

The Rev. Maria McDowell, PhD

Rector

St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church

Portland, in Beautiful Oregon.