



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

April 1, 2019

Senate Committee on Housing  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fagan, Vice Chair Heard, members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for SB 8 and the -1 amendments, which provide attorney's fees for instances in which an affordable housing development is appealed to the Land Use Board of Appeals, and the developer or the city prevail.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including non-profit housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them, and vacancy rates have dropped precipitously towards zero in communities across Oregon. People – our neighbors and members of our community – are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table. During the last school year, over 21,750 of our school children in grades K – 12 experienced homelessness at some point during the year.

Across Oregon, we have skilled affordable housing developers who are experts at building safe, stable, and affordable rental housing and affordable homes for sale. Their work is complex, and begins with identifying potential locations, needs, and resources. We know that local communities need additional support and resources to assist in the identification and appropriate zoning of sites for multifamily housing, and are working to support efforts to increase staff capacity and expertise at the local level.

We also know that even when sites are zoned appropriately, there may be concerns expressed or challenges filed by local neighbors that have little to do with the proposals themselves. These neighbors may be motivated by concerns over living near affordable housing and misconceptions about who lives in affordable housing or who simply want density to be limited, use zoning and design arguments to increase the difficulty of siting housing.

We know that people who live in and need access to safe, stable, and affordable housing are just like the rest of us – parents trying to provide a better life for our children, seniors who have helped to build our communities and now rely on social security for their income, people who experience a disability who rely on a limited and fixed income, and other people working low wage jobs who need assistance in the face of rising housing costs.

When affordable housing developments are challenged and appealed to the Land Use Board of Appeals, we know that it costs precious time and resources. The vast majority of affordable housing developers in Oregon are non-profit organizations or public housing authorities, who rely on public dollars to build and finance affordable rental housing. Delays due to neighborhood backlash and appeals mean that projects may cost more to build, may not include as many homes, or may not be built at all.

Challenges to affordable housing may be a delay tactic, or an attempt to reduce the size and scope of the project, even in the face of overwhelming need across our communities. We believe that Senate Bill 8 and the -1 amendments will help to provide reimbursement for attorneys' fees as well as potentially reduce the number of claims which only seek to delay the project. We are concerned about what we perceive to be the large number of projects which face delays simply because neighbors are concerned about living near affordable rental housing and they wish it to be built somewhere else. Affordable housing is already difficult to finance and to build – we cannot let the additional costs of delay tactics to be added to the cost of the homes our communities need.


Affordable housing is an important part of our community infrastructure, and the people who call these apartments home are vital members of our community – they work as construction workers, bank tellers, school teachers, day care providers, health aides, and janitors; they are the seniors who helped to build our community; they are the people who experience disability and deserve a place to call home integrated into our community.

We know what home, and what stable housing, means to all of us. When people have safe and stable housing, it has important and significant benefits, and allows people to build for their futures. Kids are able to focus on the things that matter – being kids, doing their homework – instead of worrying about where their families will sleep at night. Parents are able to focus on work, on family, and on community. Safe and stable housing that people can afford is key to accessing opportunity.

We urge you to support SB 8 and the -1 amendments.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh  
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

## **Housing Alliance Members**

1000 Friends of Oregon  
211info  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
BRIDGE Housing  
CASA of Oregon  
Central City Concern  
Chrisman Development  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Creswell  
City of Eugene  
City of Forest Grove  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Hood River  
City of Portland  
City of Tigard  
Coalition of Community Health Clinics  
Coalition of Housing Advocates  
Common Ground OR-WA  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Community Action Team  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Community Housing Fund  
Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Community Vision  
Cornerstone Community Housing  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Enhabit  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Fair Housing Council of Oregon  
FOOD for Lane County  
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon  
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East  
Hacienda CDC  
Housing Authority of Clackamas County  
Housing Development Center  
Housing Oregon  
Human Solutions  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
Impact Northwest  
Innovative Housing, Inc.  
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty  
JOIN

Lane County Health and Human Services  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Lincoln County  
Looking Glass Community Services  
Mainstream Housing, Inc  
Metro  
Mid Columbia Housing Authority  
Native American Youth and Family Center  
(NAYA)  
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.  
(NEDCO)  
Neighborhood Partnerships  
NeighborImpact  
NeighborWorks Umpqua  
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing  
Northwest Housing Alternatives  
Northwest Pilot Project  
Oregon AFSCME Council 75  
Oregon Center for Christian Voices  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Oregon Food Bank  
Oregon Housing Authorities  
Oregon Law Center  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
Portland Homeless Family Solutions  
Portland Housing Center  
Proud Ground  
Raphael House  
REACH CDC  
Rogue Action Center  
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.  
ShelterCare  
Sisters Habitat for Humanity  
Sponsors, Inc.  
SquareOne Villages  
Street Roots  
Transition Projects  
Turning Point  
Washington County  
Welcome Home Coalition  
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services