

Greetings, Chair Fahey and Committee Members,

My name is Rev. Julia Nielsen and I live in Portland. I am a pastor of Portsmouth Union Church and we are also active members of the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition, a broad coalition of faith communities in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington County, leveraging our land and resources so that all Oregonians can come home.

I shared my verbal testimony this morning regarding the 6 years of effort my own church undertook to use our land in St. Johns, Portland, to build affordable housing. I'd like to stress that there are universal concerns that affect all religious institutions such as mine that are attempting to support our unstably and unhoused neighbors all over Oregon.

- Religious organizations have available, undeveloped land all over the state that can be used to build affordable housing. Faith communities own the most land of any type of entity in most cities and communities, second only to the State itself.
- There is a huge cost savings to building using faith land because we already own the land we are developing.
- Faith land is already zoned residential, in almost all cases and is often situated in the midst of communities experiencing community destabilization due to high housing costs.
- Allowing faith communities to build affordable housing stabilizes our neighborhoods and is a strong anti-displacement strategy.
- Current land use regulations can be a lengthy process and add cost to these projects. My own church spent over two years and more than \$50,000 to navigate these processes. That time and money could have been used to house our community members and neighbors struggling under the housing emergency. Please remove regulatory barriers for religious organizations to build on the land we already own.

Your action is crucial. Please approve the HB 2008 so that faith communities across the state of Oregon can build affordable housing on our 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 and county.

Respectfully,
Julia Nielsen