



May 11, 2021

Representative Julie Fahey, Chair
Representative Winsvey Campos, Vice Chair
Representative Lily Morgan, Vice Chair
House Committee on Housing
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Deschutes County Support for SB 391

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Campos and Morgan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of SB 391 to allow rural accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on behalf of the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.

We strongly support rural ADU legislation and respectfully encourage the 2021 Legislature to approve measures to increase housing supply. As you know, Deschutes County is Oregon's fastest growing county. The demand for all types of housing in our region has only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. We face a critical shortage of affordable housing for our growing population across our County. Rural ADUs are an important option to address our region's growing housing needs.

Rural ADU legislation would allow us to:

- Provide housing without significant public resources;
- Increase the supply of rental, supportive and multigenerational housing;
- Legalize some existing, unpermitted second dwelling units; and
- Increase the affordability of housing by allowing property owners to purchase or maintain a home with rental income from the ADU or from the primary dwelling if living in the ADU.

We encourage the Committee to provide local control to counties to determine development standards and limitations governing ADUs. While Deschutes County supports more local control than drafted in A-Engrossed SB 391, the proposed standards are workable and address issues of statewide interest.

We understand that in other parts of our state, there has been concern that allowing rural ADUs will negatively impact the rural nature of Oregon's farmland. That is not the case in Deschutes County. We have a large number of rural residentially zoned properties not connected to farm use and in close proximity to our cities and unincorporated communities. Where residential lands exist near resource land, the bill now includes an important provision to require accessory dwelling units to have adequate setbacks from adjacent lands zoned for resource use.

Oregon counties interested in implementing SB 391 may examine other land use priorities identified in their respective comprehensive plans to ensure that rural ADUs are sited in suitable locations and subject to local standards.

The legislation also implements Deschutes County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2011, Policy 3.3.5 by allowing ADUs in Rural Residential Zones:

Maintain the rural character of the County while ensuring a diversity of housing opportunities, including initiating discussions to amend State Statutes and/or Oregon Administrative Rules to permit accessory dwelling units in... Rural Residential Zones.

Substantial support for rural ADUs exists in Deschutes County. Allowing rural ADUs would be a valuable tool in helping us alleviate the housing shortage we are currently experiencing and expect to face for many years ahead.

Finally, contrary to arguments that this bill will allow rapid sprawl, the bill:

- Prohibits the creation of any new lots or parcels;
- Allows existing rural residentially zoned properties to be used more efficiently;
- Requires accessory dwelling units to be located in close proximity (within 100 feet) to the primary dwelling; and
- Limits accessory dwelling units' size (900 square feet of usable area) and use/occupancy (short-term rentals are not allowed).

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact any of the Commissioners below or Nick Lelack, Community Development Director by phone at 541-385-1708 or by email at Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org.

Sincerely,

DESCHUTES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Anthony DeBone, Chair



Phil Chang, Vice Chair



Patti Adair, Commissioner

c: Senators Lynn Findley, Tim Knopp, and Dennis Linthicum
Representatives Daniel Bonham, Jason Kropf, Vikki Breese Iverson