



Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2398 for the Associated Wall and Ceiling Contractors of Oregon and S.W. Washington (AWCC). AWCC is a signatory contractor organization dedicated to the betterment of the wall and ceiling sector of the construction industry. We work closely with our labor partners to promote education, safety and the highest quality craftsmanship.

We recognize the importance of increasing energy efficiency in buildings and finding other ways to reduce energy waste. Oregon is already at the forefront of building codes development and was ranked in the top 10 most energy efficient states by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) in 2020. HB 2398 is attempting to fix problems that do not exist and will create a variety of different problems across the construction industry.

The Reach Code is currently an optional energy construction standard that is separate from the statewide building code. This allows additional options for builders, consumers and contractors to increase energy efficiency in construction if they choose to do so. If builders do choose to build to reach code, they can tap into Energy Trust of Oregon energy efficiency incentives to help offset the increased costs for consumers. If Reach Codes become mandatory, it is unclear if Energy Trust dollars could still be used in this manner and could further increase the cost of housing.

We are also very concerned about the process by which Reach Codes are set. The baseline statewide building codes are updated every three years in a thorough and open stakeholder process. As the Reach Codes are optional, they do not share the same development process as the base code.

Additionally, HB 2398 would threaten Oregon's statewide building codes which has been a model for states across the country. A statewide code creates surety for consumers, contractors and developers which in turn reduces construction costs and time. Allowing local jurisdictions to adapt different codes would create a patchwork of different codes that are not developed through the standard BCD process and will lead to conflicts with other codes. At the very least, if the Reach Code is allowed to be adopted locally it should undergo the same BCD development processes other specialty codes do. This would help reduce potential code conflicts and create necessary consistency for consumers and contractors across the state.

We respectfully ask that the committee vote "no" on HB 2398.

John Killin
Executive Director
Associated Wall and Ceiling Contractors