



February 4, 2023

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS
Oregon State Capitol 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: House Bill 2889 – February 7, 2023, Public Hearing

Chair Dexter and Committee Members:

Since 2004, Housing Land Advocates (HLA) has worked to ensure that Oregonians of all income levels can obtain adequate and affordable housing. We are a proponent of land use policies and planning choices that advance affordable, fair, and equitable housing outcomes. Our organization has participated in state initiatives to reform the Goal 10 Housing Planning program set in motion by HB 2003 (2019) through membership on Technical Advisory Committees and Work Groups and through advocacy.

As your committee begins review of HB 2889, we would like to commend the DLCD staff and housing team for their outstanding work. The bill is the culmination of several years of work aimed at better allocating resources, including planning capacity, to promote housing production. If implemented, it will help address our housing and homelessness state of emergency by supporting the production of the kinds of housing Oregonians—of all income strata—need, where it is needed.

We do have concerns about elements of the bill, which we will continue to flesh out in more detail, if necessary, as the bill progresses through subsequent versions and hearings. Now, at the outset, we'd like to raise a few global issues for you to consider, as follows:

- We find that too many potentially contentious issues, such as accountability measures, are relegated to future rulemaking and the discretion of the Department. We would prefer to see clear and decisive legislative action.
- We have concerns that the balance between preserving farmland and natural resources on one hand, and allowing urbanization on the other, may be tilting too far in the direction of allowing development to occur without a legal means to contest it.
- Finally, while it acknowledges the spirit of fair housing, the legislation fails to define what it means. Recommendation 2.2 in the OHNA report reads, “HPS implementation should advance fair housing outcomes.” We recommend using the vetted language recommended in Appendix B, Section E of the OHNA report, to define fair housing in Oregon. It reads, “‘Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing’ is defined as taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.”

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We look forward to continuing to engage with you throughout the development of HB 2889.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jennifer Bragar

Jennifer Bragar
President

cc: Board