



March 1, 2023

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, GENERAL GOVERNMENT, AND VETERANS
Oregon State Capitol 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: House Bill 2650 – Testimony in Support

Representative Graber and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on HB 2650. Since 2004, Housing Land Advocates (HLA) has worked to ensure that Oregonians of all income levels can obtain adequate and affordable housing. We are proponents of land use policies and planning choices that advance affordable, fair, and equitable housing outcomes. We support HB 2650 because it reserves a place at the table for communities of color, underrepresented communities, and people with relevant lived experience in informal work groups and task forces convened to work on housing and other statewide policy issues.

Time and again, we have seen what happens when key stakeholders, including people of color and people who will be affected by legislative choices, are not included in policy formation: unintended consequences. Even if members of work groups have good intentions, they may lack the knowledge that lived experience brings.

This bill goes substantially beyond talking about the need to involve people with diverse perspectives in policy formation. It makes it a mandate and helps ensure that financial concerns do not present an insurmountable barrier.

The bill is structured to still allow for ad-hoc problem-solving among key stakeholders. The parameters addressing the size and number of meetings of the affected informal workgroups and task forces covered by HB 2650 provide a good starting point for expanding engagement while allowing flexibility.

In keeping with that spirit of flexibility, HLA suggests that the text of SECTION 1. (2) (e), stating that “[m]eetings of the informal workgroup or task force must be scheduled at times that are convenient for members participating outside of their paid employment, school, parenting or other community responsibilities,” should include an allowance for virtual meeting participation.

With that revision, we request your favorable consideration of HB 2650. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jennifer Bragar

Jennifer Bragar, President

cc: (by e-mail)
Board