



Sightline Institute is an independent think tank working to advance sustainability in the Pacific Northwest. We believe it exists at the intersection of environmental health and social justice.

We're writing to express concerns about SB 850, which threatens to significantly increase the barriers to creating much-needed affordable housing.

Affordable apartment buildings provide more than just the homes, essential as those are. They also, in many cases, give Oregonians with less money the option to reduce their energy use. **When people choose to live in compact, walkable neighborhoods with smaller homes and shared walls, they voluntarily cut their energy use roughly in half.** Oregon should be doing what it can to let people make this choice if they want to.

Unfortunately, SB 850 as currently written would allow *fewer* Oregonians to make that choice. A 2019 study for the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department found that prevailing wage rules at that time added about 9 percent to the total cost of each regulated-affordable home Oregon is desperately trying to build more of.

At any given level of public funding, the people who end up paying for these higher wages would be those who don't get to live in the affordable homes that will never exist. Please amend SB 850 to preserve the current prevailing wage exemption for affordable housing projects.

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