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March 22, 2023

Rep. Maxine Dexter, Chair, and Members
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
State Capitol
Salem, OR

Re: HB 3309 and -1 amendment: accessible housing

Dear Chair Dexter and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3309 and the -1 amendment, regarding accessible housing. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

Reports and surveys indicate that those with one or more disabilities make up a significant, and growing, share of Oregon's population. Current estimates are that from 14%-34% of Oregonians have a disability.¹ Yet, as we discovered in the work groups that developed the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) program that was just passed as part of HB 2001, we do not understand the scale of that need and are not meeting it. The standards for building accessible units are too low, and we will fall further behind unless accessibility is built into how we approach housing in Oregon.

HB 3309 directs the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS), the state agency responsible for distributing affordable housing funds, to:

- Report annually to the legislature on the number and percentage of units it funds that include accessibility features
- Provide the legislature with an estimate of the amount of unmet need for accessible housing units statewide
- Review building codes and land use standards that apply to accessible units
- Develop policies to increase the housing supply for households that include a person with a disability
- Research and propose alternative ways to increase the amount and quality of accessible housing

¹ See, e.g., OHSU, <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-on-disability-and-health/oregon-disability-health-data-and-statistics> and US Census Bureau (2021) American Community Survey

HB 3309 is a necessary first step to ground the state in an understanding of the housing amount, types, and location needs of those with disabilities, but it is just a first step. We look forward to taking the next – to adopting policies and committing investments in housing to meet the accessibility needs of all Oregonians

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director

