



HOUSING SENIORS | CREATING HOPE | PILOTING CHANGE

March 24, 2023

Representative Maxine Dexter, Chair
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
900 Court St NE, H-283 Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3309

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony, on behalf of Northwest Pilot Project, in strong support of HB 3309. This bill is an important step towards determining the unmet housing needs of people with disabilities and older adults, and providing incentives for developers to meet those needs.

Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP) is a social service agency with over five decades of experience in providing housing stabilization services to low and very low-income older adults, age 55 and over, experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County. Accessible housing plays a critical role in ensuring that our senior population can successfully age in place.

Demand for accessible housing is expected to grow significantly by 2040 when older adults age 65 and older will account for 21% of the U.S. population.¹ In Oregon, the rate of growth among the senior population will outpace the national statistics, with the proportion of older adults expected to reach 22% by 2030.² Despite the growing senior population and the increasing need for accessible housing, research indicates that there is a “startling scarcity of units in the U.S. housing stock that are suitable for aging[:] . . . fewer than 4% of housing units could be considered livable by people with moderate mobility difficulties, and a miniscule fraction are wheelchair accessible.”³

¹ “Scarcity of Accessible Housing for an Aging Population,” National Low-income Housing Coalition, July 2016, <https://nlihc.org/resource/scarcity-accessible-housing-aging-population>

² Oregon’s Demographic Trends (Oregon Department of Administrative Service: Office of Economic Analysis, July 2019), https://www.oregon.gov/das/OEA/Documents/OR_pop_trend2019.pdf

³ Housing for an Aging Population (Housing Policy Debate, July 2016), Sewin Chan and Ingrid Gould Ellen. https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Housing_for_an_Aging_Population.pdf

HB 3309 will begin to address the current lack of accessible housing statewide by developing incentives in Oregon Housing and Community Services' (OHCS) funding offerings to encourage developers to increase the quantity and quality of accessible units. Additionally, this bill will require OHCS to study:

- The unmet need for accessible housing units;
- State rules and building code standards relating to accessible housing; and
- The number and percentage of housing units funded by OHCS that are accessible.

The state's housing supply must be responsive to the needs of people with disabilities and older adults. We strongly encourage your support of HB 3309. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Golino de Lovato
Executive Director
Northwest Pilot Project