



House Committee On Housing and Homelessness Support Testimony for HB 3414

Chair Dexter, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3414 with the upcoming amendments. By way of background, the Oregon Home Builders Association (OHBA) represents nearly 3,000 members engaged in the residential construction industry and dedicated to affordable homeownership opportunities for all. Foremost, we want to commend Governor Kotek on making housing production a top priority in Oregon and setting an important goal of producing 36,000 units a year. We greatly appreciate of the work Governor Kotek and her team has put into this bill and look forward to continuing working with them and this Committee to solve Oregon's housing crisis.

Both affordable and market rate housing providers know firsthand that our current planning and permitting system will not allow us to reach the levels of production we need to properly house Oregonians. If we want to solve our housing production and homelessness crisis, we must move with urgency to break the status quo and remove bureaucratic roadblocks to drastically increase the numbers of homes built. Continuing along the path we are on will only reinforce inequities in our system and make our housing backlog worse. It is time for the State and local governments to reframe our system with urgency and bold solutions to meeting housing need.

OHBA supports the approach taken in HB 3414 to increase enforcement at the local level to create more housing across the income spectrum faster, and to grant flexibility from certain planning requirements to allow more projects of different types and price points to be built. As evidenced by the success we are seeing in California, strong accountability measures and technical assistance can be leveraged to clear the way for thousands of new units statewide. Additionally, limiting conditions under which local governments may deny needed variances for housing development can eliminate arbitrary requirements that often prevent needed units from being built.

With additional amendments, HB 3414 could have an even greater impact to enhancing housing production in Oregon. For example, we would like to see consideration of ministerial approval processes, greater use of model code provisions, and limiting attorney's fees in appeals of housing projects. On a technical note, we would also encourage the removal of the term "habitability" in Section 2. From our understanding, this term is used in structural code regulation, and is not generally used in land use law. Including it may have the unintended consequence of imposing additional standards in the land use application than exists today. Last, we want to ensure that any amendments do not accidentally work against the goals of this bill. We understand that sideboards should be included to support public health and safety, but we also must allow needed flexibility to allow important projects to overcome unique site-specific hurdles.

Again, we look forward to continuing working with the Governor's Office, Speaker Rayfield, Chair Dexter, stakeholders, and members of this Committee on this important piece of legislation. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these comments and encourage the Committee to reach out with any questions.