



February 6, 2024

To: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

RE: Support for SB 1537

Chair Jama and members of the Committee:

My name is Preston Korst and I am the Director of Government Affairs at the Home Building Association of Greater Portland. I am writing on behalf of thousands of businesses and individuals seeking to address our region's biggest issues by building the housing, infrastructure, and jobs that make our state livable and economically vibrant.

Our industry strongly supports SB 1537. This bill will increase housing production and improve affordability by unlocking new lands for housing, funding vital infrastructure projects, and creating an office dedicated to ensuring cities have the support and accountability they need to get housing approved. The combined effect will help our state out of a long-standing and worsening housing crisis.

I believe that our current planning and growth management system prevents us from reaching the levels of housing production we need to properly house Oregonians. Continuing along the path we are on will only reinforce inequities in our system and make our housing shortage worse. We must reframe how we approach growth in this state, while reaching towards more innovative approaches that will meet our varied housing needs—this includes finally addressing the land constraints that have driven up the cost of housing for decades. SB 1537 would do just that while proposing one of the strongest requirements for affordable housing production in the United States.

Oregon's homebuilders are ready to create the housing our communities need, but face countless barriers to getting even the simplest home designs approved. From overly litigious neighbors, unnecessarily strict planning criteria, and time-intensive permitting windows—the path to get from concept to approved is become too difficult. Our industry supports SB 1537 because it is intended to eliminate many of the barriers builders face by creating a new office that will provide oversight to make sure our housing laws are being followed at the local level. These are all important changes that will help Oregon overcome its housing crisis. We strongly urge you to support SB 1537.

Thank you for your consideration,

Preston Korst

Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs
Home Building Association of Greater Portland