

Testimony in Support of SB 1537

February 7, 2024

Chair Jama, members of the Committee,

For the third time in five years, I am having to find a place to live. Theoretically, this should not be an onerous ordeal. I am employed full-time with benefits and a competitive salary at Curry Public Library in Gold Beach, Oregon. I am a long-time resident of Gold Beach, having moved here as a four-year-old with my family in 1985. In our time here, my family has played an integral role in the community; my father was a pastor and the jail chaplain, and later Gold Beach's mayor for a total of 16 years. Now as an adult, I, too, am fully immersed in the community; I volunteer with the City as an Urban Renewal Agency citizen advisor and am active in my church. I mention this to emphasize that I am blessed with a large network of family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances, many people who care about me and look out for me. However, this fact has not lessened the anxiety I have experienced each time I have needed to find a new rental.

Today, I checked the rentals listed on Zillow. There are two. One is listed for \$2,500 per month and the other for \$3,300 per month. The first would be roughly 83% of my net income, while the second would exceed my net income. And purchasing a home now is completely out of the question. I am 42 years old with a good job, and yet within the last several years, it has become increasingly apparent that in order to continue to live in my hometown, I may need to find a roommate, take on a second job, or couch surf. Another answer is to move to a place with more affordable housing options. It saddens me that I am faced with this reality. I love my town, I love my job, I love my people. I want to be able to continue to contribute to the community who raised me. I would love to own a place in my community, but that dream seems entirely out of reach. I am discouraged.

At the library, we post all county notices from the Curry County Community Development division. Nine times out of ten, these notices are land use action applications for approval of an Administrative Conditional Use to operate a Short-Term Rental in a Single-Family Dwelling. I know the abundance of short-term rentals is only part of the problem, and there are more factors involved in my community's housing crisis, but whatever the reasons, we have come to the reality of a housing shortage not only for low-income residents, but also for middle-income professionals such as school teachers, hospital workers, and public library staff. We need people from all income levels to make a community worth living in.

Something has to change. I believe Senate Bill 1537 is a step in the right direction to supporting that change and I hope that my community will be able to utilize this bill. Thank you for allowing me to share my story and giving me the opportunity to support Senate Bill 1537.

Respectfully,



Jordan Popoff of Gold Beach, Oregon