

Submitter: Camille Colby

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

I believe that our current planning and growth management system will not allow us to reach the levels of 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 backlog worse. We must reframe our system with urgency and a bold approach to meeting housing needs, which includes finally addressing the land constraints that drive up the cost of housing. SB 1537 would do just that and proposes one of the strongest requirements for affordable housing production in the United States. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote YES on SB 1537 this Session.

Oregonians need you to take bold action to solve our housing crisis this Session. SB 1537 is a step in the right direction to increase housing production and bring down the costs of housing for Oregonians. Please vote YES on SB 1537 to make meaningful change in the lives of Oregonians this Session.

In order to solve our housing crisis, we need to nearly double the current rate of housing production. Our current planning and permitting system will not allow us to reach those numbers because there are too many regulatory and financial barriers. SB 1537 is intended to alleviate many of those barriers by granting us adjustments from certain design standards, increasing our land supply to build affordable housing, and requiring accountability at the local level. For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to support SB 1537 this session.

Oregon's homebuilders are ready to build the housing their communities need, but we need serious changes to our planning and permitting system to make it happen, and the future of our state depends on it. I support SB 1537 because it is intended to eliminate many of the barriers builders face every day, including overly strict planning criteria, costly appeals of needed housing from those who do not want more housing, and a lack of buildable land supply that drives up the costs of building. Moreover, SB 1537 creates a new office to provide oversight to make sure that our housing laws are being followed at the local level. These are all important changes that will help Oregon overcome its housing crisis. For these reasons, I encourage you to support SB 1537 this session.

While I support all of the components of SB 1537, I am especially supportive of the one-time UGB expansion piece because it will allow cities and builders to work together to build complete, walkable, mixed-use communities, that includes housing of all types and tenures, including opportunities for affordable homeownership.

Additionally, the bill includes one of the strongest affordability requirements in the United States. This UGB process guarantees that affordable housing will be built, while the current UGB expansion does not. For these reasons, I encourage you to support SB 1537 this session.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments today.