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February 5, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Senator Pham, Chair and Senator Dick Anderson, Vice-Chair
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony in support of SB 444

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Committee Members

NHA is a nonprofit, mission-oriented, community-based affordable housing organization. On behalf of the families, seniors, Veterans, and people living with disabilities who make their homes within NHA's affordable housing portfolio of 2,300 units, NHA supports HB 444 to conform state building code to accessibility requirements under the Fair Housing Act and to certain American National Standards Institute standards for housing accessibility.

In the U.S. one in four Americans has a disability and one in eight has difficulty walking. However, only one in one hundred apartments are estimated to be physically accessible. While the US Census Bureau estimates that 15% of Oregonians have disabilities, the building codes require accessibility features in just 2% of units. The standard does not facilitate fair and equitable access to housing opportunities. Over 60% of fair housing complaints are based on disability status, many about reasonable accommodation or modification requests to a unit by a person with a disability.

SB 444 seeks to address the severe under supply of accessible residential rental units in communities across Oregon in three ways:

1. Require 10% of housing built with State funds to comply with Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).
2. Increases building code requirements for Type A units among all residential housing to 10%.
3. Decrease to three the number of units in a project that triggers Fair Housing design and construction requirements.

Developers and owners of affordable housing funded through Oregon Housing and Community Services will be implementors of the new requirements. As such an organization, **NHA supports SB 444 to foster social equity with emphasis on creating complete communities for all.**

Sincerely,

Trell Anderson
CEO/Executive Director