

February 14, 2025

The Honorable Khanh Pham
Oregon State Senator
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Housing and Development Committee
Support for SB 949

Chair Pham and members of the Senate Housing and Development Committee,

My name is Freda Walker, and I am a Portland resident. I want to express my strong support for SB 949, which will help develop affordable, mixed-use housing in the Portland metropolitan area. For 44 years, SEI has been a cornerstone of the North and Northeast Portland communities, dedicated to providing comprehensive services and opportunities that empower youth and families to achieve self-sufficiency and reach their full potential.

Recognizing the critical link between housing and opportunity, SEI expanded its focus in 2019 to include affordable housing development. SEI understood access to safe, affordable housing is a fundamental human right and a crucial foundation for success in all other areas of life. Since then, they have engaged in this space, co-developing three affordable housing projects. There are currently two of those projects under construction, demonstrating their commitment to tangible solutions to the housing crisis.

SB 949's focus on integrating residential units with community services and commercial spaces aligns perfectly with SEI's holistic approach to community development. Their integrated model is essential for creating thriving communities where individuals and families flourish. The bill's prioritization of meeting the housing needs of families and individuals facing housing insecurity in North and Northeast Portland resonates deeply with SEI's mission and the populations they serve. With the devastating effects of displacement, lack of affordable housing in these communities, and economic revitalization, I believe SB 949 offers a critical pathway to addressing this urgent need.

SEI is poised to partner with the Housing and Community Services Department and other stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of SB 949. SEI's deep community roots, recent experience in affordable housing development, and unwavering commitment to empowering individuals and families make this bill an asset in their effort.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue. I urge you to support SB 949 and help create a more equitable and sustainable future for our community.

Sincerely,



Freda Walker