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LiveAble Homes submits the following written commentary to the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness on House Bill 3589.

LiveAble Homes specializes in designing, developing, and certifying accessible, universally designed homes in Oregon and SW Washington. Our owners and co-founders have backgrounds in real estate with direct personal experience caregiving and modifying homes for older family members. As community leaders in accessible design and through our partnerships with local non-profits, builders, developers and aging/disability advocates, we know that the lack of accessible and affordable options for senior housing in our state and local communities has created hardships for many of our older adults who may be experiencing poverty, living with a disability (physical, mental or cognitive) or both. We support House Bill 3589 that would require the Housing and Community Services Department to develop a senior housing development initiative that would be funded through a transfer of funds from the Senior Property Tax Deferral Revolving Account through July 1, 2031. This bill aligns with the Governor's Housing Production Strategy by leveraging existing funds for the creation of more housing specific to older adults or to modify their existing homes more affordably.

THE NEED

Portland's approved Housing Production Strategy identifies the following statistics as of 2023:

- 63,541 houses currently exist with older residents and 22,126-27,314 homes are needed (p.13).
- Of these homes with a resident 65 or over, 33% have at least one disability (p.12).
- 65,279 households currently have at least one person with a disability and 21,777-26,318 more accessible homes are needed

The growing need for homes accessible for our older adult population to age in place is staggering and continues to increase every day. It is important to note that these numbers do NOT include households that may not have a current aging or disabled resident today but who have visitors that are unable to have barrier-free access to their homes.

A study completed by LiveAble Homes in January 2025, based on data in the RMLS, showed that 2782 single dwelling residences were sold throughout the city of Portland between 6/15/24 – 1/15/25. Of those homes sold:

- 4% or **109** listed were listed with one or both of the following accessibility features:
 - “accessible entrance”

- “ accessible approach with ramp”
- After careful review of exterior photos, of those 109 –only **40** (3.7%) had zero step thresholds

This means that of all homes sold during that 6 month period, 1.4% of the total inventory was clearly able to be accessed by someone in a wheelchair. Based on this limited data, older adults in a wheelchair or looking to downsize without significant renovation for future mobility needs during that period would have had 40 homes to choose from throughout Portland.

We also know, based on the 2024 AARP Home and Community Preferences Survey that:

- 75% of older adults want to stay in their home or community for as long as possible
- 43% of older adults say they will need to make their homes more accessible as they age.

With severely limited inventory of accessible housing that would meet their needs, modifying a current home is often the only way to access safe housing. For many older adults in our state, those necessary home modifications are financially out of reach.

THE SOLUTION

We believe that the passing of House Bill 3589, in partnership with organizations like ours and others in the residential construction industry, will allow our older residents to access housing that is constructed to meet their specific needs. Requiring the Housing and Community Services Department to develop a senior housing development initiative that would be funded through a transfer of funds from the Senior Property Tax Deferral Revolving Account incentivizes housing for older adults and persons with disabilities, including housing that “prioritizes visitability and accessibility” (HB 3589. Sec 2.1). Additionally, “coordinating with the Oregon Health Authority in operating the authority’s Healthy Homes Program under ORS 431A.400 to provide modest accessibility modifications to homes housing older adults or persons with disabilities” Sec 2.1(b), supports those older adults who can age in place with the financial assistance needed to safely stay at home.

At LiveAble Homes, we understand that policy, construction and design decisions are often made to allow for the highest level of cost and systems efficiency. If this committee does not clearly support the creation and/or modification of accessible and visitable housing, builders and developers will not make it a priority. Clearly stated expectations, funding and incentives in collaboration with actionable oversight and tracking will allow access to the qualifiable and quantifiable data to show compliance with the goals of our state in safely housing some of our most vulnerable citizens.



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LiveAble Homes

