



City Manager's Office
925 S. Main Street
Lebanon, Oregon 97355

TEL: 541.258.4969
www.lebanonoregon.gov
ron.whitlatch@lebanonoregon.gov

March 17, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Se. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Bill 6

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development:

On behalf of the City of Lebanon, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Oregon Senate Bill (SB) 6 (2025). The City of Lebanon is opposed to SB 6 as currently drafted. While we understand and share the goal of increasing housing production, the proposed legislation would impose significant challenges on our city's ability to process building permits effectively. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the bill sponsor on amendments that would meaningfully address these concerns.

As a small city, we already face challenges related to staffing capacity and resource constraints. Our permitting staff is often stretched thin, working diligently to ensure that applications are processed efficiently while maintaining compliance with safety and zoning standards. The imposition of a strict 45-day shot clock on all building permits—regardless of their complexity—would exacerbate our staffing shortages and put undue pressure on our limited budget.

If this legislation were to pass and result in additional staffing needs to meet the mandated timeframe, we would have no choice but to implement a substantial increase in permit fees to cover the costs of hiring additional staff. This increase would place a financial burden on applicants and developers, counteracting the very goal of the bill by making development more expensive.

Furthermore, SB 6 applies broadly to all building permits rather than focusing specifically on housing-related permits. By doing so, the bill creates universal pressure to accelerate processing times for all permits, including those unrelated to housing. This could lead to unintended consequences, such as rushed reviews, increased permitting errors, or the need to deny applications outright when necessary review time is unavailable. Instead, we believe extended permit review periods resulting from jurisdictions with demonstrably inefficient permitting processes should be referred to the Housing and Production Accountability Office for case-by-case review rather than addressed through a sweeping statutory mandate that penalizes all cities equally, regardless of their permitting efficiency.

To make this measure workable for all cities—especially those with limited staff and financial resources—we urge the committee to consider amendments that would:

1. Limit the scope of the shot clock to single-family and middle-housing projects, which are more straightforward to process.
2. Provide a clear definition of a “complete permit application” and allow the clock to pause when applications are returned to applicants for additional information.
3. Exempt cities from liability for delays caused by applicant inaction or incomplete submissions.
4. Explore alternative solutions, such as state-provided technical assistance or a shared staffing pool to address shortages in building permit processing.

We urge the committee to carefully consider these concerns and work toward a solution that supports responsible housing development without placing undue financial and operational strain on cities like ours.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Ron Whitlatch
City Manager