

Testimony in support of HB 2964

March 20, 2025

To the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

I am writing to express my strong support for the passage of HB 2964, which aims to increase shovel-ready acreage for affordable housing projects throughout Oregon. This bill represents a crucial step forward in addressing our state's housing crisis by empowering faith communities and other non-profits to develop vital housing for those in need.

The availability of land is a critical component of our housing crisis, often being snapped up by the highest bidder for maximum profit. However, faith communities possess land in the heart of our communities and have a deep commitment to using their resources to serve their neighbors. Despite their willingness, these communities often face significant financial barriers, particularly in the pre-development phase, which includes essential steps like feasibility studies and community engagement.

HB 2964 offers a solution by providing small grants to help faith communities overcome these financial hurdles. This investment would be a modest outlay for the state, yet it would unlock substantial benefits across Oregon. By removing this barrier, we can immediately unlock acres of land ready for development, with many more communities poised to follow suit if this initiative proves successful.

This bill is not just about addressing a pressing need; it's about creating a more equitable and sustainable future for our communities. Affordable housing is essential for workers and families, as it provides stability and security, allowing them to contribute fully to their communities. Passing this bill would allow us to invest in the well-being of our neighbors and the economic vitality of our state.

The time to act is now. For those who cannot afford to wait, passing HB 2964 is a critical step toward ensuring that everyone has a place to call home. I urge you to seize this opportunity and support the passage of this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Dwyer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.