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Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, and members of the committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Astoria Housing Alliance, an advocacy nonprofit dedicated to ensuring every Astorian has access to safe and affordable housing. We want to share our **strong support for HB 2138**.

As you know, the housing shortage is a crisis affecting all parts of the state. The problem is particularly severe on the North Coast, including in Astoria, where over 40% of all renters are cost-burdened, paying over 30% of their income to rent, and nearly 1 in 4 renters are paying more than half of their income toward rent<sup>1</sup>. The ongoing crisis negatively impacts the quality of life for our family, friends, and neighbors by forcing them to make the painful choice to forgo necessities, like food and healthcare, just to keep a roof over their heads.

Beyond the impact on the individual, the housing shortage and affordability crisis have been identified as one of the primary economic constraints negatively affecting Clatsop County's economic outlook<sup>2</sup>. A lack of affordable housing options means local businesses often cannot attract, recruit, and retain the employees needed to expand their businesses and create the opportunities necessary for a dynamic and growing economy.

Given the challenges we face, it is imperative to do everything we can to increase the production of homes that Astorians can afford. Middle housing types are critical for meeting our housing production goals and addressing the affordability crisis. Furthermore, supporting middle-housing production means using existing land more efficiently, a primary concern for geographically limited coastal areas like Astoria and the surrounding area.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/arh-2024-cost-burden-share>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.clatsopcounty.gov/media/41961>



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HB 2138 builds on the work that is already to boost housing production done by:

- Prohibiting local governments from imposing excessive regulations that could hinder middle housing development.
- Making it easier to develop accessible and affordable homeownership units by allowing additional units on certain properties.
- Reforming land use rules to streamline the approval process for middle housing projects, reducing unnecessary delays and costs like traffic impact studies.
- Preventing restrictive private covenants from blocking needed housing development.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for moving HB 2138 forward.

Respectfully,

Andrew Kipp  
President  
Astoria Housing Alliance