

March 27, 2025

Senator Aaron Woods, Co-Chair

Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair

Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

900 Court Street NE, Salem OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg and Members of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development:

I have dedicated my career to property management since 2012, spending years working in both affordable housing and conventional market-rate communities. Affordable housing, however, is where my passion lies—not just because it provides shelter, but because it changes lives. Working in affordable housing isn't just about filling units; it's about making a lasting, positive impact on people who often have nowhere else to turn.

Every day, I meet people who are struggling—families, single parents, working professionals—who simply need a stable place to live. I have personally experienced the challenges of being a single mother, earning too much to qualify for housing assistance but still struggling to afford market-rate rent. Without my knowledge of affordable housing programs, I would have assumed I wasn't eligible, just as so many people do when they walk into my office. The truth is, there are far too few affordable housing options, and many people don't even realize they qualify.

In Salem and surrounding cities like Albany, Monmouth, and Dallas, affordable housing is scarce. Properties like Cornerstone, Claxter, and The Jory provide a vital resource, but they are few and far between. The demand is overwhelming, waitlists can stretch two to three years long. I have had to look people in the eye and tell them that despite their desperate need for housing, there is simply no availability. It never gets easier.

Affordable housing is a steppingstone, not a handout. It allows:

- A single mother to afford a two-bedroom apartment while saving for a future home.
- A young adult to focus on finishing college without having to work 60+ hours a week just to survive.
- Someone experiencing homelessness to escape dangerous environments and rebuild their life.

Yet, instead of investing in more properties like these, we continue to see luxury high-rises being built, charging \$2,500+ for a two-bedroom apartment—completely out of reach for many working families.

More affordable housing would be life-changing for our community. It would give hardworking individuals and families the opportunity to live with dignity, stability, and hope for a better future. The need is urgent, and we must do more to expand access to housing that is truly affordable for all.

Thank you for your time,



Summer Henderson

Community Manager

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