



Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan, and members of the House Committee on Rules,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 174. For background, Oregon REALTORS® is an industry association comprised of roughly 18,000 members who work as real estate brokers, principal real estate brokers, real estate property managers, and affiliated industry professionals. In turn, our members represent hundreds of thousands of Oregonians in real property transactions across the state.

SB 174 will make our housing crisis worse. The cost and availability of homeowners insurance is worsening, and passing SB 174 will only exacerbate the problem.

As representatives of home buyers and sellers, and as fierce advocates of homeownership, our members are tracking issues related to insurance closely. This is because our members know that if insurance is unavailable for a property, a seller won't be able to sell their home. If insurance is unaffordable, buyers won't be able to buy a home. And if insurance is unavailable or unaffordable, existing homeowners are harmed.

During a meeting of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire in late-May, Commissioner Stolfi described how the Department of Consumer and Business Services regulates insurance companies primarily to ensure that they remain solvent. This is because insurance is fundamentally an assessment of financial risk – in other words, the likelihood that an insurer will be obligated to pay a claim. Adding insurance practices to the Unlawful Trade Practices Act, as SB 174 would do, simply increases the likelihood of financial risk to insurers.

The public has shown their concern about insurance affordability and availability in response to the Statewide Wildfire Hazard Map. While the assertion that the map was never used by insurers to calculate risk has been repeatedly emphasized, the fear that it has been used by insurers persists among many. In response, [SB 83](#) seeks to repeal the map.

Additionally, last month, the legislature passed [SB 85](#) with the intention of identifying strategies to improve insurance affordability in the state. Relatedly, the Office of the State Fire Marshall recently entered into a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety to help enhance community resilience – which would, in turn, improve insurance affordability. These actions are welcome.

We have all seen the results of overregulation of the insurance industry in California. We all want to avoid making the same mistake. SB 174, while well intended, would be counterproductive to Oregon's ongoing efforts to address issues related to insurance.

The actions taken this year represent a step forward. SB 174 represents two steps back.

Oregon REALTORS® urges you to vote NO on SB 174.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony.