



VANESSA CORNWALL

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DATE: February 9, 2026
TO: House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
FROM: Heather Buch, Vice Chair for Lane County Board of Commissioners, District 5
RE: HB 4037, Relating to Housing

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

I am Heather Buch, Vice Chair of the Lane County Board of Commissioners, representing District 5, and I strongly support HB 4037, specifically section 17, both as introduced and as amended.

We want to sincerely thank Representative Marsh for including this language, and then Speaker Fahey and her staff, Governor Kotek and her staff, and various state agencies for their partnership with Lane County and the University of Oregon's School of Planning, Public Policy and Management—known as 3PM.

This language comes directly from a two-day convening of 75 local, rural, and community stakeholders at the Inspire Oregon Housing Incubator, co-hosted by Lane County and 3PM. It reflects real-world experience with what is slowing housing production across rural Oregon.

Rural and urban communities alike face a persistent housing shortage, and complex, inconsistent permitting processes often make it worse. This bill addresses this by requiring local governments to use clear and objective standards for housing approvals, reducing ambiguity and delays that drive up costs and discourage needed housing. By streamlining procedures and limiting unnecessary hearings and appeals, this section helps make housing approvals predictable and fair—critical steps toward meeting Oregon's housing goals.

We also support the proposed amendments to section 17, which add detailed notice requirements, provide flexibility in approving applications, and clarify that local appeals are limited to applicants. While the amendments introduce more specificity, it maintains the core principles of transparency, efficiency, and applicant control. Both versions advance the same outcome: removing barriers and ensuring housing development is not stalled by subjective standards.

This bill—whether in its original form or as amended—represents meaningful progress toward a more efficient, equitable housing approval system. I urge your support.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OFFICER