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March 16, 2021

Public Testimony
Oregon Senate
Committee on Housing and Development

SB 8

Chair Jama and Committee Members,

My name is Trell Anderson, and I am the Executive Director of Northwest Housing Alternatives. As a nonprofit, mission and community-based organization, we offer nearly 2,000 affordable rental homes across 16 counties in Oregon to seniors, families, Veterans, and people with disabilities.

We have over 800 additional affordable rental homes in development in communities such as Tigard, Portland, Florence, and Ontario.

We have direct experience navigating affordable housing projects through land use processes and appeals by neighbors, including through the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). Two times, the local Planning Commissions, City Councils, and LUBA ruled that our projects met all standards, and both projects moved forward. Both projects were delayed due to the process, were subjected to unnecessary risk, and both projects incurred substantial legal fees to defend the project through the process – costs that should be dedicated to building affordable housing rather than paying for legal fees.

The “not-in-my-back-yard” movement in Oregon clearly uses the land use process to subvert affordable housing projects. At a minimum, when an affordable housing project succeeds through the appeals process, at a minimum the project/sponsor should be reimbursed of legal fees by those who initiate the appeals process. This should apply beyond zoning processes and include all land use processes like design and/or historical design reviews.

Second, allowing out-right development of affordable housing on land that is owned by religious organizations, and zoned commercially, will unquestionably unlock opportunities for new affordable housing, and streamline the process for such developments. We are working with two religious organizations where this would move projects forward with fewer barriers to total approximately 350 to 400 units in the Portland metro area.

I am supportive of the principles of SB 8 to remove barriers for affordable housing development. Please do not miss this opportunity to make a difference in the development and delivery of affordable homes across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trell Anderson".