



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Nick Fish, Commissioner
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
Steve Novick, Commissioner

May 19, 2015

Senator Sara Gelser, Chair
Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee
900 Court St, NE, Hearing Room B
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

We write in support of HB 2564-A and the -5 amendment. Both the bill and the amendment provide local communities with important tools to increase the supply of affordable housing in new developments.

While we support the underlying bill, it does not go far enough to address the current affordable housing crisis in the Portland metro area. Although homeownership opportunities are an important part of addressing affordable housing, the greatest need in the Portland area is affordable rental units for low-income families. While recent estimates seem to indicate that wages are ticking up slightly as the economy slowly recovers from recessionary impacts, these gains are not shared amongst renter households and Communities of Color. The most recent data from the Portland Housing Bureau shows that the average family of color is effectively priced out of the current rental and for sale market in Portland. A lack of affordable homes and rental units means many families are unable to live in resource rich communities and are segregated to more distressed areas. These areas are often far from jobs, concentrating poverty and causing traffic congestion and high commuting costs.

The -5 amendment balances incentives for developers with affordability requirements – for both sale and rental units in new developments – along with market-rate housing. The amendment does not apply to existing rental or for sale housing units. This approach allows communities to customize a housing policy to help ensure low and moderate income individuals and families can afford to live in their communities near their jobs, schools, and services.

HB 2564-A and the -5 amendment will enable local jurisdictions to work with developers and communities to find balanced approaches to providing affordable housing. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

Charlie Hales
Mayor

Dan Saltzman
Commissioner

Amanda Fritz
Commissioner

Steve Novick
Commissioner

Nick Fish
Commissioner