

2016-01-30

Chair Gelser and members of the committee:

I am Cheryl Green of Portland. I am writing to ask you to support allowing cities to use inclusionary zoning as a local housing solution.

I am an active member in the traumatic brain injury (TBI) community, and I support tenants' rights. I have seen people with TBI disabilities forced to move out of the city center to the suburbs for more affordable housing. Filling out the paperwork for this, organizing a move, and paying for a move is exceedingly difficult for people with cognitive impairments from TBI. Likewise, the change in routine, isolation from familiar places and community members, and the substantially increased public transit commute lead to depression, isolation, and exhaustion, making them further ill and less able to contribute to society. People with disabilities should not be forced to the suburbs but should be allowed to choose where they live. For those with TBI, being very close to services; stores; social, volunteer, and work opportunities; libraries; schools; and their friends and family is crucial. Many people claim isolation causes them more severe decline and problems than their TBI disabilities to start with. Allowing them opportunities to find affordable housing close to services and in a familiar community will help keep people less dependent on the safety net and support them in contributing by increasing socializing, keeping commute times low, and offering opportunities for community involvement.

Inclusionary zoning can help increase housing opportunity by providing cities with an important tool to create more affordable units and diverse communities.

We must act now to increase the number of affordable units, and inclusionary zoning is an important local solution that Oregon should allow. I hope that you will support these measures, and I thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Green