



CITY OF  
**PORTLAND, OREGON**

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

February 1, 2016

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 SB 1533. This legislation provides local communities with important tools to increase the supply of affordable housing in new developments.

The City of Portland and communities across our state are experiencing an unprecedented affordable housing crisis. Although homeownership opportunities are an important part of addressing affordable housing, the greatest need in the Portland area is affordable rental units for low and moderate income families. Roughly half of all households in Portland are renters and 66 percent of renter households earn less than 80 percent of area median family income. At the same time Portland is experiencing increases in rent that are the highest annual increases in the nation, and the average monthly rent for new rental housing is \$1,954, or \$23,448 per year.

Communities of Color have been especially hard hit by the housing crisis. The most recent Portland Housing Bureau data 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.

SB 1533 balances incentives for developers with affordability requirements – for both sale and rental units in new developments – along with market-rate housing. The bill 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.

SB 1533 will enable local jurisdictions to work with developers and communities to find balanced approaches to providing affordable housing. We applaud the Legislature for taking up this important issue and we urge your support.

Sincerely,

  

Charlie Hales  
Mayor

Amanda Fritz  
Commissioner

Nick Fish  
Commissioner

 

Dan Saltzman  
Commissioner

Steve Novick  
Commissioner