



January 29, 2016

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Human Services and Housing Committee:

I write on behalf of Oregon Opportunity Network (Oregon ON), the statewide association of affordable housing and community development nonprofits, in strong support of HB 4001.

Working to provide housing and services in communities across Oregon, our members see people in crisis everyday—people living in cars and on the street, people one paycheck from homelessness, people working full-time but still struggling to pay the rent. This has been a growing problem across Oregon, but in the past couple of years we've hit the perfect storm. With populations growing and the market not building new units during the Recession, vacancies are at all-time lows and rent increases are at all-time highs.

We know that a stable, safe place to call home is the key to success. We know the policy and resource strategies that can put us back on track to meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable Oregonians.

Oregon ON urges adoption of a significant agenda to tackle Oregon's housing crisis, with HB 4001 as the lynchpin.

HB 4001 provides crucial pieces of the solution for our housing crisis, including:

1. Lifting the ban on Inclusionary Zoning (IZ).

Lifting the ban on IZ does not mandate anything. It would simply allow communities to adopt through local public process, an inclusionary zoning policy as one tool for the development of affordable rental and/or single-family housing. The bill includes language to ensure that local policy will include incentives and sideboards to protect home builders. We're part of a broad and diverse statewide coalition in support of lifting the ban on IZ, including SEIU Local 49, Oregon AFSCME, Oregon AFL-CIO, the Oregon Conservation Network, the cities of Corvallis, Eugene, Hood River, Milwaukie, Portland, and Wilsonville, Lincoln County, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Urban League, the Oregon Food Bank, Elders in Action, and many others.

2. Enacting emergency tenant protections.

Low-income tenants across the state are facing mass evictions and large rent increases. They need immediate relief, including reasonable protection from sudden "no-cause" evictions, providing 90 days' notice for rent increases, and protection from retaliatory actions by landlords.

Many Oregon ON members, as operators of housing, are landlords; and our housing authority members work closely with private landlords who rent to folks with Section 8 vouchers. So we know the challenges of being a landlord, and the need for a balanced approach that protects the rights of all parties. But we strongly agree that tenants need longer notice periods before rent increases, and tenants should not be evicted except for good reasons.

3. Give local governments the flexibility to move quickly to shelter people experiencing homelessness. We appreciate that HB 4001 gives local communities that have declared a housing emergency the ability to waive codes or regulations as necessary for the swift installation of temporary housing units. Local governments are working very hard to shelter and house their residents; this provision reduces the regulatory burden and will help communities move more quickly and efficiently to get folks housed.

Thank you very much for your consideration of HB 4001, and for all your work on behalf of the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,



Ruth Adkins
Policy Director

Oregon ON member organizations:

Statewide

CASA of Oregon
Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare
Catholic Charities
Enterprise Community Partners
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Housing Development Center
NOAH (Network for Oregon Affordable Housing)
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Central & Eastern Oregon

Columbia Cascade Housing
Community Connection of NE Oregon
Housing Works
NeighborImpact
UGMW Nonprofit Development Corporation

Coastal

Northwest Coastal Housing
Community Action Team, Inc.

...Plus over 100 businesses, government agencies, community organizations and individuals across Oregon who support our mission.

Southern Oregon

ACCESS
Housing Authority of Jackson County
NeighborWorks Umpqua
United Community Action Network

Willamette Valley

Community Home Builders
Cornerstone Community Housing
Farmworker Housing Development Corporation
Housing and Community Services of Lane County (HACSA)
Mainstream Housing, Inc.

NEDCO
Oregon Housing and Associated Services
Polk CDC
St Vincent de Paul of Lane County
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services

Portland Metro

Bienestar

BRIDGE Housing
Central City Concern
Community Housing Fund
CPAH
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Home Forward
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Authority of Washington County
Human Solutions, Inc.
Innovative Housing, Inc.
NAYA Family Center
PCRI
Portland Housing Center
Proud Ground
REACH Community Development
ROSE Community Development
Sabin CDC