



Monday, February 1, 2016

Senator Sara Gelser, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Service and Early Childhood
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Gelser:

We write to you on behalf of Anti-Displacement PDX, a coalition of 32, and growing, community-based organizations working to end displacement and expand access to affordable housing in Portland. We encourage you to scrutinize the policies in Senate Bill 1575, which will not address the housing needs of residents of the Portland Metro region.

Our coalition's primary focus has been adding strong equity and anti-displacement provisions to Portland's Comprehensive Plan Update. In July 2015, we celebrated a collective win for all Portlanders, when Portland's Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) adopted a Recommended Draft Comprehensive Plan Update that include 28 policies prioritizing equity, access and choice - giving people the right to influence decisions about their neighborhoods. We commend the PSC's bold leadership, sending Portland City Council a critical message that the next 20 years will not see more dwindling affordability and housing options for people of color and low-income residents. In 2016 we are engaging City Council and staff to ensure that current and future residents of all incomes and backgrounds have access to the valuable opportunities Portland offers.

Under your consideration today is Senate Bill 1575, sponsored by Senator Edwards. The bill allows local jurisdictions to include new lands - without showing need and without protections for local farm lands - at the edges of our region's urban growth boundary, with a false

stipulation that some undefined percentage of land is dedicated to the construction of affordable housing. It also requires local governments to prepare a “housing cost impact statement” whenever a land use, housing, real estate, property development, environmental protection or infrastructure ruling is made by ordinance - lengthening the development process. The bill also limits even *voluntary* inclusionary zoning inside the UGB, capping at 10 percent of multi-unit developments over 30 units. It also constrains cities use of systems development charges (SDCs) and construction excise taxes, most commonly and effectively used to make community improvements that enhance livability. These policies have great potential to slow, or even halt the development of much needed affordable housing development in the Portland area, in favor of development at the fringes of our region far from transit, jobs, and other opportunities.

SB 1575 also allows cities to ignore their **legal obligations to provide housing for all current and forecasted residents, regardless of income**. Oregon’s land use laws require that each city establish a 20-year land supply for the housing needs of all. Currently, if a city does not have enough land it may expand its UGB. However, if a city does already have a 20-year land supply and yet has a need for affordable housing - this indicates insufficient residential zoning at densities and housing types that residents require, particularly in locations with the greatest access to transit and opportunities. In such cases, these cities have not stepped up to zone residential land supply that actually meets the housing needs of all its residents, often to the exclusion of those of moderate- and low-incomes, minimum wage workers, the elderly, and single-headed households.

In Portland we have seen the effects of these insufficient land use practices translate into mass displacement for thousands since the onset of development projects such as the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area. For many of our communities the promise of this major public investment has instead brought rising property values that have pushed out people of color and low-income residents, seeking affordable rents at the edges of our region where transportation access is difficult, with often dangerous road conditions. Rising costs and insufficient affordable options have also contributed to record houselessness, overwhelming our service systems.

It is imperative that we learn from these lessons, applying them to pending new investments such as Powell Division and SW Corridor - and allow local jurisdictions to zone sufficiently to meet the vast demand for affordable housing. A 10 percent cap for inclusionary zoning would get us nowhere near the, at minimum, 10,000 new affordable units that Portland’s 2035 Comprehensive Plan goals suggest. We can no longer allow our neighborhoods to be overrun by high-end luxury developments, without a thought to those who have already made it their home. SB 1575 represents more of the same predatory development we have seen hit Portland residents so profoundly.

Anti-Displacement PDX Coalition has spent a year with Portland Planning staff, carefully crafting land use, housing, and equitable development policies that pave the way for tools such as linkage fees, development exactions, cooperative land trusts, land banking, community benefits agreements, displacement and affordability impact analysis, inclusionary zoning incentives,

permanently affordable housing (rental and homeownership), and renter protections. SB 1575 would undermine these collective efforts. We are confident that having these tools available will allow our city to rebound and learn from historic missteps. We believe that our city has the opportunity enact equity policies, not just talk about what equity means for those in need of housing.

Portland communities are acutely aware of gentrification and displacement as well as the risks they pose for our most vulnerable residents. It is necessary to have local control of land use and development policies that allow cities to address their community's specific needs. We oppose the policies in SB 1575 as proposed, and we ask that you consider the significant impact that such a bill will have on the health and well-being of tens of thousands of residents across the Portland Metro region.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Anti-Displacement PDX Coalition

Anti-Displacement PDX Members signed onto this letter:

350PDX
1000 Friends of Oregon
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)
Coalition of Communities of Color
Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT)
Community Cycling Center
Community of Practice
Design + Culture Lab
Groundwork Portland
League of Women Voters of Portland
OPAL, Environmental Justice Oregon
Portland Harbor Community Coalition
Right 2 Dream Too
Right 2 Survive
ROSE Community Development
Upstream Public Health
Verde
Voz, Workers' Education Project

Non-Members in Support:
Welcome Home Coalition

cc:
Senator M. Dembrow
Senator J. Kruse
Senator L.M. Anderson
Senator A. Olsen

Senator J. Edwards