

Office of the Mayor
110 E. Main Street,
PO Box 445
Talent, OR 97540



February 1, 2016

Dear Chair Gelser and members of the Human Services and Early Childhood Committee:

My name is Darby Stricker and I am the mayor of Talent, Oregon, located in Oregon's beautiful Rogue River Valley, just off Interstate 5. We are located seven miles south of Medford and four miles north of Ashland, in Jackson County.

I am here today to urge you to lift the statewide ban on inclusionary zoning this session.

Like many small towns across Oregon, Talent struggles with finding the workforce housing we need to sustain healthy economic growth for our community. To complicate matters, as housing prices have risen and available inventory has gone down in our region, we are seeing an influx of working families and students to our community from neighboring cities. Our current housing market vacancy rate is at 2%, and the strain on our inventory of workforce housing is actually pushing out some longtime residents.

Increasing workforce housing is a priority goal for the city of Talent and we are actively exploring all possible avenues. As part of our planning process we are conducting economic impact studies into annexing urban reserves with high density residential zones. We are also discussing working with the Talent Urban Renewal agency to move the urban renewal district as a workforce housing development strategy.

This is not a time to tie the hands of local jurisdictions. We know that the housing problem, while statewide in scope, must and will be addressed in many different ways in each community. That is how it is supposed to work, and it is the only way we can effectively and sustainably address the housing crisis.

But I cannot be successful in responding to this crisis when the state ties my hands with a ban on a proven, flexible planning tool. The city of Talent, like cities across Oregon, needs all available tools at our disposal as we do our due diligence to plan, assess, and implement local solutions to address our housing and development needs.

Thank you for your kind attention today,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Darby Stricker'. The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Darby Stricker, Mayor