

April 6, 2017

House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3155

Dear Chair Keny Guyer, Vice-Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chair Olson, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of Neighborhood Partnerships to express our support for HB 3155. HB 3155 creates the Task Force on Use of Surplus Public Lands, which will study the sale and use of surplus lands to support housing.

In 2013, the Legislature created a workgroup on housing affordability and land use issues. The workgroup, named Affordability, Balance and Choice, was Co-Chaired by Representative Parrish and Representative Reardon. I served as a facilitator of the conversation, along with Jon Chandler of the Oregon Home Builders Association.

In 2014, the workgroup made formal recommendations to the Legislature, which can be found in OLIS: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2015R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/44681>. One of those proposals recommended by the workgroup resulted in HB 3524, which was passed by the Legislature. HB 3524 created a process by which the state needed to notify non-profit affordable housing development organizations of surplus property and to give them an opportunity to purchase the land.

As a result of HB 3524 (2015), Oregon Housing and Community Services worked together with the Department of Administrative Services. Today, when surplus land is made available, OHCS is notified, and an email is sent out to a list of non-profit affordable housing development organizations.

This program, while successful, did not go far enough. HB 3524 ran into several hurdles, primarily around statutory and constitutional limitations on the uses of Oregon Department of Transportation and Department of State Lands resources.

HB 3155 would seek to bring together stakeholders to pick up the conversation where HB 3524 left off. We need to continue to identify creative strategies to address our housing needs.

We know that communities thrive when residents have safe, stable homes that they can afford. Housing is truly the foundation of opportunity.

I urge your support of HB 3155. Thank you for your consideration, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,



Janet Byrd  
Executive Director, Neighborhood Partnerships