



**Association of
Oregon Counties**

DATE: April 10, 2017
TO: House Committee on Business and Labor
FROM: Stacy Michaelson, Association of Oregon Counties
SUBJECT: HB 3299

Chair Holvey, Members of the Committee:

For the record, I'm Stacy Michaelson, Policy Manager with the Association of Oregon Counties. I'm here today to speak in favor of HB 3299.

Recognizing the housing challenges arising across our entire state, AOC formed a Housing Subcommittee in late 2015. We conducted a small-scale survey among our members and community partners, and found that nowhere in our state has been spared in this housing crisis, although it does take a different form, depending on the area. While we primarily hear about the rental crisis in the metro area, we found that even our rural communities are facing housing shortages – although it is often related to lack of available and/or desirable homes, which is to say many communities have homes that are sitting vacant or in disrepair.

“Dark” or “zombie” homes are part of this problem, as they sit vacant--often deteriorating—as individuals struggle to find adequate housing. Not only are these homes a part of the housing shortage, but they also have an impact on the neighboring community. Homes that sit vacant, are likely to be a target of criminal activity. Both this and ongoing deterioration can bring down the value of nearby homes.

Particularly for those vacant homes owned by large financial institutions, there is little ability for local governments to work with the property owner to get the home back into available housing stock. HB 3299 would give cities and counties some recourse in these situations, and helps hold property owners accountable for dealing with their properties responsibly.

HB 3299 provides another tool in the toolbox for addressing the housing crisis in our state and for supporting our local governments in doing so. I urge you to support this bill and to give it the work session that we believe it deserves.

Thank you.