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May 3, 2017

Chair Sara Gelser; Vice-Chair Alan Olsen; Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

The League of Oregon Cities represents all 241 incorporated cities across Oregon with the founding principle of protecting cities' home rule authority. It is this principle that allows Oregon cities to form and support the community they want, addressing their needs, and developing according to their vision.

Each city in Oregon is unique with a different understanding of what the primary issues are and a local focus on how the city can address those issues. Local elected officials are best positioned to facilitate the community's response to the challenges they face. Cities partner with the state to develop the best Oregon. Within that partnership, there should be a respect and understanding that local issues should be addressed by the local government.

Housing is an issue where the cities and the state must work together to develop and maintain a variety of tools that can answer the shortage of housing units and preserve the existing units that house our citizens. Each city council must determine which tools to pick up and which tools set aside to address housing preservation and development in the city. Local officials are best positioned to know the impact that a particular program will have on the housing and infrastructure of the city. When the government is local, the process and decision can be tailored to the city's specific circumstances.

The solution to the housing shortage in Portland will look different than the solution in Pendleton which will look different than the solution in Port Orford. The needs are different, the community is different, and conversation will be different. In the case of rent stabilization measures, the city is better situated to determine the impacts on the community, both for renters and for landlords. For some, this will be a decision to leave that tool in the box but for others it will mean adopting some form of restrictions that impact a resident's ability to afford their home.

For these reasons, the League supports the provision of HB 2004 which repeals ORS 91.225.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Erin Doyle  
Intergovernmental Relations Associate  
League of Oregon Cities