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Senate Housing Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Honorable Chair Fagen, Vice Chair Heard, Members of the Committee

I am writing to support **Senate Bill 8 (SB 8)** on behalf of Housing Works, the regional public housing authority serving the Central Oregon Counties of Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson. Our agency administers over 1,200 federal Housing Choice Vouchers and owns and operates over 1,000 units of affordable housing units in the three Central Oregon Counties. Central Oregon is the fastest growing region in the State and we are its largest provider of affordable housing. Almost all of our residents and voucher holders earn incomes less than half of the area median and a substantial proportion less than a third of the area median.

Over the past several years Housing Works has been able to develop, on average, 100 affordable housing units a year. Frequently, if not universally, our developments are opposed by neighborhood groups or adjacent property owners who because of misperceptions, ignorance or prejudice believe that affordable housing will reduce property values, drive crime rates or otherwise create an undesirable condition in their neighborhoods. The evidence suggests that these fears are unwarranted. Our developments are attractive, do not produce high crime rates and have had no effect on property values.

Despite the realities of our developments, the relative ease and low cost of the appeal of land use decisions in the State of Oregon has had the effect of delaying and in some case completely derailing desperately needed affordable housing. Even in the case when courageous City Councils have resisted NIMBY constituents and approved lawful affordable housing land use applications, the quick, cheap and often frivolous appeal to LUBA can add months and tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of developing affordable housing. **SB 8** can level the playing field and discourage NIMBY groups from pursuing frivolous appeals to LUBA, by requiring appellants that lose LUBA appeals of deed restricted affordable housing developments pay the legal costs of the prevailing parties.

I thank the Committee for your consideration of this needed legislation and for your service to the residents of the State of Oregon.

Yours truly,

David Brandt
Executive Director