



Columbia Cascade Housing Corp.

March 29th, 2019

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

Sent via e-mail to: shous.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

RE: Senate Bill 8 and the -1 amendments

Chair Fagan, Vice Chair Heard, Members of the Senate Housing Committee:

As Executive Director of Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation, a not-for-profit community development corporation serving Hood River, Wasco and Sherman Counties in Oregon and Klickitat and Skamania Counties in Washington, I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 8 and the -1 amendments which would support affordable housing by providing prevailing party attorney fees to developers whose projects are challenged to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA).

One of our organization's primary lines of business is the development of affordable rental homes. Our existing portfolio consists of 389 units at 23 properties where the 389 households we serve are a mix of lower wage-earning working households to those living less able than you and I as well as those living on fixed incomes. Our developments help us achieve our mission to promote and administer affordable housing solutions.

As with most all developments, affordable housing developments are risky and often take more time to complete than most desire. Over our organizations' 28 years of development experience, we have, unfortunately, experienced delays triggered by neighbors opposing our developments. At times we have been referred to as community builders as almost all of our developments bring people together - all too often those people coming together are to oppose our development.

In one instance and during 2007 our organization's locally approved site plan and variance request for 30 units of affordable housing and a community room was appealed to LUBA. The cost to legally participate in this appeal process for our organization exceeded \$25,000. The result of the appeal, besides the added legal costs, was a substantial delay and a significant reduction in the total number of affordable rental homes now constructed on the site. While we are glad to have completed the development of 12 affordable rental apartment homes on this very site in 2012, we still wished we could have done more to meet the identified housing need as part of this development.

If Senate bill 8 with the -1 amendments were law when we were undertaking this development, I believe we could have built more affordable rental units. I know that our costs to develop would have been less without this appeal. I also know the neighbors that were initially adamantly against our development are the same ones asking us to come back to build more affordable housing opportunities albeit a different location. Senate bill 8 will provide the right balance of discouraging folks from delaying developments that are solely based on concerns about living next door to affordable housing while still allowing the critically important public input.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Committee for your continued work on affordable housing solutions and this opportunity to submit testimony into the record. I encourage you to vote 'yes' on Senate Bill 8 and the -1 amendments.

Respectfully,

Joel Madsen
Executive Director



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