

Greetings Housing Committee Members,

My name is Rev. Sara Gross Samuelson and I live in Milwaukie. I am the co-leader/pastor/organizer of Storyline Community and lead organizer for the Clackamas Land and Housing Cohort, a member of the Leaven Community Land and Housing Coalition, a coalition of faith communities in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington County, leveraging our land and resources so that all Oregonians can come home.

As an organizer and I pastor, my day to day work brings me alongside people who deeply care about their neighbors and their neighborhood. Every day I hear stories of families who can no longer afford their current housing, who are considering moving out of state, doubling up with family, or who are at risk of eviction due to unemployment and underemployment from the COVID pandemic. The need for housing supply on all levels is great. The need for housing supply for our most vulnerable neighbors is great. And as a person of faith, I firmly believe that what we need, what our neighbors need... is HERE. We just need to be creative and create space for community to work together to meet those needs.

There are over 600 acres of faith community land in Clackamas County. I'm sure there are similar quantities in counties across the state. I work with faith communities who deeply desire to offer their land and resources to help meet the needs of our community. They just need a little help along the way. Regulation, taxes and zoning requirements continue to be a sometimes daunting and insurmountable barrier for many of our communities actively discerning the use of their property to meet our community's housing needs.

Your action is crucial. Please approve the SB8 so that faith communities across the state of Oregon can build affordable housing on our land with as few barriers as possible.

Our neighbors need your help, creativity and support in leveraging every option and financing stream to begin solving the crisis of housing instability and homelessness in our city and county.

Respectfully,
Rev. Sara Gross Samuelson
Storyline Community
Milwaukie, OR