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May 13, 2021

Chair Julie Fahey and Committee Members
House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 8A (Affordable Housing)

Dear Chair Fahey and Committee Members:

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 40 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice. Our work includes ensuring that the promise of Oregon's land use Goal 10, Housing, is implemented inside our cities and towns with policies that both encourage and require needed, diverse, and affordable housing choices for all.

1000 Friends of Oregon supports SB 8A. The bill applies only to proposals for regulated affordable housing, inside urban growth boundaries. Siting this housing has proven challenging, even on lands zoned for residential use, sometimes because of unnecessary and expensive approval hurdles these projects must go through, and sometimes because of opposition to who will be living in the homes. SB 8 streamlines and removes barriers to siting affordable housing in three ways.

- It allows affordable housing on lands zoned for commercial use or owned by a public entity or a religious institution. A local jurisdiction would not be able to require a zone change, but may apply siting and related standards. Commercial lands, in particular, are often well-located. The nature of how we shop is changing, a trend accelerated by the Covid pandemic. This is leaving many commercial sites under-utilized, yet these lands already have infrastructure. Allowing housing to be located or co-located in a mixed-use development could both revitalize some commercial areas and provide more affordable housing near other services and amenities.
- On land already zoned for residential use, SB 8A allows a density bonus for affordable housing, scaled to the surrounding allowed density, thereby enabling affordable housing providers to build more housing cost-effectively.
- Legislation passed in 2019 provided that if a qualifying affordable housing project is approved locally, appealed to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) and affirmed, LUBA

shall award attorney fees to prevailing party. SB 8 clarifies that LUBA shall also award attorney fees if it reverses a quasi-judicial land use decision denying the application.

Senate Bill 8A states that it does not apply to lands that that cannot be adequately served by water, sewer, storm water drainage, or streets; have a slope of 25% or greater; are within 100-year flood plain; or are constrained by land use regulations relating to natural disasters and hazards or natural resources.

Senate Bill 8A will make it easier for affordable housing providers to find and develop suitable parcels that are located where families need to be – near schools, stores, services, and jobs – in other words, in their communities.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director

