

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
In Support of Senate Bill 458
Senate Committee on Housing and Development
February 18, 2021**



Chair Jama and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government for the greater Portland metropolitan area, tasked by Oregon statute with making decisions every six years about how and where the region will grow. Our region has a strong track record of supporting the core purposes of Oregon’s statewide planning system – protecting farms and forests by facilitating efficient urban development, while providing additional room for people and jobs when needed by expanding the urban growth boundary.

In recent years, we have worked with our partners to improve how we do this work. We have financially supported local efforts to make the most of existing land, adopted a 50-year plan for urban and rural reserves, required concept planning to ensure that UGB expansions will result in needed housing, passed legislation authorizing mid-cycle adjustments to the UGB, and continuously improved our technical analyses that support growth management decisions. In its most recent growth management decision in 2018, the Metro Council added four well-planned areas to the UGB as proposed by four cities in the region, and that year Metro’s voters also approved a \$652.8 million bond measure to support investments in affordable housing.

In 2019, the Metro Council strongly supported the goal of HB 2001 to increase the availability of “middle housing.” In fact, in its 2018 decision to expand the UGB, the Council included conditions of approval requiring the four cities responsible for planning the areas added to the boundary to allow the same types of housing that are now allowed under HB 2001. We also recommended early on that HB 2001 be broadened to apply to more of the area within our UGB, including unincorporated areas that house hundreds of thousands of residents.

In addition, Metro supports efforts to make homeownership possible for all of our community members, particularly BIPOC communities. Significant racial disparities in homeownership exist in greater Portland. In 2016, 63 percent of white households owned their homes, compared to 30 percent of African American/Black households, 42 percent of Hispanic households, 43 percent of Native American/Alaskan Native households, and 58 percent of Asian households.

For the 2021 session, the Metro Council’s priorities call for supporting legislation that will expand affordable home ownership options, increase home ownership for BIPOC households, and provide additional tools and authority to local governments to address housing supply and affordability.

The bill before you today will advance these goals by supporting effective implementation of HB 2001. By allowing land divisions for new middle housing, SB 458 will facilitate the creation of new opportunities for affordable home ownership in existing communities and expand home ownership and wealth creation for BIPOC Oregonians.

We are aware that amendments are needed to ensure that local governments can address important development, safety and process issues. With that understanding, the Metro Council urges you to support SB 458.