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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 33



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

To: Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Date: February 7, 2023

Subject: Support HB 2889

Vice Chairs Helfrich and Gamba, and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Dr. Maxine Dexter and I am honored to be the State Representative for House District 33, which includes NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, and Cathedral Park. I am grateful for this opportunity today to present to you HB 2889, the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis Policy and to ask for your strong support.

You all are very clearly aware of the housing crisis before us and the call to action we are hearing at every level of government - from our Governor to our city councilors. We are also hearing it from our constituents, the people who rely on us to take action when their health and safety is at risk. Our lack of housing, let alone affordable housing, has led us to a humanitarian crisis that has evolved over decades and must be met with urgency, collaborative leadership and determination. We must take bold, courageous action to meet this crisis with the response our state deserves. Passing HB 2889 is one of those actions.

There are many statutory steps over the last 50 years that led us to the development of HB 2889 as you see before you today. I will take a few minutes to review the legislative path of this policy, highlight some of the important aspects of the bill and will share what work still needs to be done. At its core, this policy establishes a process in partnership with local jurisdictions with populations of 10,000 or more, to first identify how much and what kinds of housing is needed in the community and then makes sure it can be built in a timely fashion. The ultimate goal is to make sure every Oregonian has affordable options for housing in the community of their choice.

HB 2889 establishes the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, building on a transformational legacy of statewide land use planning first established by SB 10 in 1969 and then SB 100 which was signed by Governor Ted McCall on May 29, 1973. These were policies that attempted to balance the love we have for the natural spaces and rich farmland of Oregon with our need to build sufficient housing to safely and affordably house all Oregonians. The Land Conservation and Development Commission was established by the passage of SB 100 and was tasked with helping make sure local planning bodies complied with and supported statewide land use planning objectives. Ten goals for the state's planners had been established by SB 10 in 1969 and 9 more have been added since that time. "Goal 10" as it is often referred to, is the state Housing goal that we have been working towards since 1969. Interestingly, there were 10 goals laid out by SB 10, starting with Goal 1 - "Citizen Involvement", and Goal 2 - "Land Use Planning" and other goals included preservation of our scenic areas, farms, forests and water down to the very last goal of housing. It seems that we have been effective in achieving our goals in the order in which they are prioritized.

I find this fact incredibly reassuring! We have the ability, as lawmakers, to not just pass laws, but to help our agencies and local government execute them when we prioritize the outcomes we wish to achieve. We must now prioritize the building of housing AND continue to preserve our scenic land, water and resources that we so deeply treasure. With HB 2889, housing becomes our top priority. To make sure we take action commensurate with this, we need to change our goals:

1. Food and shelter shall be prioritized over other investments
2. Housing that is safe, accessible and affordable in the community of their choice should be available to every Oregonian
3. State agencies shall work collaboratively with local jurisdictions to prioritize efficient housing production in all communities where there is insufficient housing choice available.

This is bold and may give some of you pause. It should. We are facing a tight budget and to prioritize food and shelter we are saying that these investments shall take precedence over others such as healthcare, education and transportation. As each of us understands, our first priority is the health and safety of Oregonians. It is impossible to live a healthy, educated and fulfilling life without access to the most basic needs of food and shelter met.

There has been enormous investment of thought, intention and public discourse that has led to the HB 2889 you are seeing today. This bill, to a great degree, is the result of HB 2003, passed in 2019, which was passed to provide the necessary steps toward helping our state reach its housing supply needs as envisioned by SB 100, while providing local jurisdictions the resources they need to accommodate future growth. HB 2003 in 2019 was a feasibility study of how to conduct a regional housing needs analysis in Oregon, and the results and recommendations were returned to the legislature for further consideration which resulted in HB 2889 after extensive community input and consideration.

Sean Edging is here with us this morning from DLCD and he will give more details about what the bill does in its current form. I cannot express enough gratitude to Sean, Palmer Mason and Ethan Stuckmayer who have spent endless hours in meetings and forums, making sure anyone who wants to know more and help form this policy had the information and understanding they needed to participate. This DLCD team has done remarkable work and we would not be where we are with this bill without their guidance.

Which brings me to a long list of other experts, advocates and policymakers who have leaned in and taken on helping form this bill. Governor Tina Kotek was the sole chief sponsor of HB 2003 and presented it to the House Committee on Land Use and Agriculture on March 5, 2019. Her vision and work with the support and dedication of others, including Representative Fahey, gave this policy the support and importance it needed to get where it is today. I am deeply grateful to pick up this work from their very steady leadership. I have had the privilege to learn from too many people to name, however there are a few who must be acknowledged as they have spent endless hours in meeting, thinking and dreaming with me of a path forward that we can be proud of for the next fifty years. This includes Michael Anderson, Mary Kyle McCurdy, Dave Hunnicutt, Samantha Bayer, Allan Lazzo, Simone Crowe, Ana Trejo, Fletcher Ray and Ariel Nelson. They aren't done with me yet as we continue to meet to work on the accountability piece of the policy which will come back to this committee next week. Today's discussion is an opportunity to get input from the community on the base bill and we will have another opportunity to get more feedback on the local accountability piece next week.

I am also deeply grateful to my legislative colleagues who have been extraordinary partners - Vice Chairs Helfrich and Gamba, Representative Fahey, Senator Jama and Senator Anderson. I am pleased with how far we have come in developing a bipartisan and interagency policy that will create long-term solutions for our Oregon communities who are facing a severe lack of access to affordable and safe housing.

Before I turn the floor to Sean Edging from DLCD, I urge you all to take time to understand the importance of this bill. I believe it is the most impactful housing policy we will pass this session and if we do it right, we will be recognizing in 50 years that the Oregon Legislature continued to be able to set goals that they held themselves accountable to. We must prioritize housing at the top of our list, rather than at the bottom, if we are to make sure that Oregonians for generations to come have access to safe and affordable housing in a state that continues to protect its forests, farms and water.

I am grateful for the many partners who will also share their testimony and to each of you for your attention and consideration today. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxine Dexter', written in a cursive style.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

House District 33 (NW & Downtown Portland, Linnton, & Cathedral Park)