



February 7, 2023

To: Representative Maxine Dexter, Chair, and Members House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Re: House Bill 2889

Good morning, Chair Dexter, Vice-Chairs Representatives Gamba and Helfrich, and members of the committee.

My name is Candace Avalos, my pronouns are she/her, and I serve as Executive Director of Verde. Our mission is to build environmental wealth by investing in climate resilience through our profound belief that frontline communities are the most important voices in the climate movement. I am testifying in support of HB 2889.

Verde fills a void to address environmental infrastructure and climate resilience needs in one of Portland's most diverse and impoverished neighborhoods. We have seen that whether it be heat waves, drought, the big earthquake, ice storms, or wildfires; the place we call home is where our communities will brace for the next crisis.

Cities and towns across Oregon have neighborhoods like Northeast Portland's Cully neighborhood. Neighborhoods that have changed from forest to farmland to suburb to city neighborhood, where people from many places found homes and built rich, rewarding communities. But due to poverty and discrimination, many of those communities weren't rich in power. And when it was time to decide how the airport should expand, or where the recycling plant should go, or who needed a new park, Cully

residents learned the consequences of not having much power and affordable housing concentrated in neighborhoods with more pollution.

To prevent displacement, Verde created the Living Cully coalition in 2010 that unites our environmental justice efforts with three non-profit community development organizations to improve the quality of life and build affordable multi family homes for people of color and low-income people, ensuring Cully will always be a place where our communities can live and thrive. Our state needs more homes at a diversity of prices in all neighborhoods---neighborhoods close to jobs, green spaces, and walkable streets.

House Bill 2889 is a thoughtful balance vetted with hundreds of Oregonians over several years. It balances change against preservation and local control against statewide standards. It improves affordability and it widens location choice. I urge you to pass this 50-year update to our state land use system.

Sincerely,

Candace Avalos  
Executive Director  
Verde