

Date: February 7, 2023

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

From: Tim McCormick, Director, Housing Alternatives Network

Dear Rep. Dexter and Committee Members,

I am here submitting in written form the testimony I had prepared for the [February 7th public hearing](#) on [HB 2889](#), **Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA)** bill.

I am Director of [Housing Alternatives Network](#), a Portland-based non-profit focusing on advocacy, research, and prototyping of cost-efficient housing approaches for those most in need -- for example, people unhoused, refugees, displacees, and lowest-income households.

We have been working with various of the state's lowest-cost builders of housing and shelter, including **SquareOne Villages**, Eugene; and with Michael Anderson of **Sightline Institute** on analysis of and suggestions for OHNA. Also, as an example I wish to here foreground, with [Cascadia Clusters](#) non-profit, which is building wood-frame cottage homes in outer Portland and Gresham areas, on sites leased from church / community groups, with *unit construction costs under \$15,000*, built by formerly unhoused &/or in-recovery local residents who are provided a living wage and extensive work training.

These Cascadia Clusters-built homes are, for expediency, presently classified as shelters or detached bedrooms, but they are really only a few steps from upgrading and expanding into permanent backyard cottages or cottage-cluster cottages.

Now, this is sort of an extreme case of cost-efficiency, but I mention it to suggest the following: we DO have means today to build affordable housing on a much wider scale, higher pace, and lower cost than conventional "capital-A" Affordable housing.

I myself lost my housing somewhat abruptly in October, and didn't have many options, but was able to move into a Cascadia Clusters-built home, and it is working for me. It is a sort of "starter home" that fits my present needs; and it was there when I needed it.

The point is, we have the space and means and workforce to create decent housing for all. What we need is the commitment and imagination to take *all means necessary*, at the scale of and on the urgent timeframe needed.

We need, I believe, to follow the wisdom of a favorite saying of my Irish Catholic mother, born in London during WWII: ***Cut your coat according to your cloth.***

Meaning that: while we are *definitely* working to get more cloth and make better coats, *this year* we will make a coat for ourselves and for everyone, with the means presently in hand. We don't make ourselves half a coat, or make a coat for only some of our family members, because they would freeze.

I urge: let's make sure there's an adequate coat for everyone, a home for all, as soon as possible by all means necessary; from which we can build upwards.

regards,
Tim McCormick