

March 1, 2023



Representative Ben Bowman

HB 2754 Testimony

On behalf of the City of Tigard, I would like to express our strong support for House Bill 2754.

In 2021, the City of Tigard lost 172 units of affordable senior housing at Woodspring Apartments. These apartments were originally developed in 1991 using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and the contractual affordability period was set to expire on January 1, 2021.

In advance of this expiration, the city worked diligently to bring the property owner and other parties together to find a pathway to preserving these units as affordable for this group of vulnerable residents. Unfortunately, despite a seemingly productive dialogue, the city and the residents were notified on January 1, 2021 that the ownership was electing to let their affordability contract lapse.

Preserving affordable housing now and into the future is a high priority for the city and I am incredibly disappointed that the owners opted to leave their affordability period in the midst of an ongoing regional housing affordability crisis.

Situations like this can and should be prevented from happening through regulations and incentives that protect the taxpayers' investments in affordable units. I think most residents of our state would be shocked and dismayed to find that properties receiving public subsidy to provide affordable housing can opt to simply convert those units to market-rate in less than a generation.

This bill is an important first step in solving this situation. Seniors are one of the groups most at risk from mass displacements, and often with the most limited alternatives for finding new housing.

The frank reality is that some residents who are displaced from units converting away from affordability protections may not find new housing in a timely way, and will become temporarily or chronically unhoused, contributing to the crisis of homelessness in our state.

I must also urge further state action to protect other vulnerable residents, including children, from these types of displacements. Multiple studies have shown the longitudinal impact that eviction and displacement often impose on children.

I urge our legislators to move this bill forward and to expand protections for our people and our investment in housing that serves all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "HLueb", with a long, sweeping underline.

Heidi Lueb, Mayor
City of Tigard