

FROM – Drew Johnson
TO – Senate Committee On Housing and Development
SUBJECT – Support SB 1051-2 to Help Address Our State’s Housing Crisis

I am writing to urge you to support SB 1051 with the -2 amendments. Oregon is the fourth most underproduced state in the nation as a share of our existing housing stock, and as a result, our housing costs are among the highest in the country. Some experts have found that Oregon is the fourth least affordable place to live in the US.

I am from Lyons – a small city with a population of fewer than 1,300 people. SB 1051-2 would provide communities like mine with a tool to quickly produce more housing and create living wage jobs. The cost of living in Oregon is high, and a tool like those described in SB 1051-2 would support the development of jobs that pay more than our AMI and help members of my community with the rapidly rising cost of living. It would help us attract new businesses and ensure there is housing that is affordable for those who live and work here.

Limited buildable lands drive up costs in the same way that limited housing inventory does. The beauty of SB 1051-2 is that it brings lands into development today that are already planned for development tomorrow. In the long run, this means that we don't actually lose more of the lands that make Oregon beautiful, while in the short run, we gain lands that make Oregon more livable.

SB 1051-2 is a modest, but important solution. It provides a voluntary tool for cities that utilizes the power of partnerships to achieve results. SB 1051-2 will help us produce needed housing for some of our most important workers, such as firefighters, nurses, teachers, small business owners, and public employees. We rely on these workers for so much. The least we can do in return is give them the opportunity to find housing that they can afford.

We desperately need more housing to bring down the cost of living for Oregon families and communities like mine need opportunities for economic development. Many Oregonians are struggling to find affordable and attainable housing, and as a result, a substantial portion of Oregon households are cost burdened by their housing payments. SB 1051-2 provides small and large cities alike with a carefully crafted, impactful tool to ramp up housing production, create living-wage jobs, and ultimately lower the relative cost of living in Oregon.

The Governor, the Legislature, and our state agencies have all agreed that addressing our housing crisis is a top priority, but without creative solutions like SB 1051-2, our state will be unable to address the crisis at the scale and speed that is needed to protect Oregon families and their budgets.

Please support SB 1051 with the -2 amendment.