

Rev. James L. Abbott
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Brookings OR 97415

March 18, 2023

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to providing Oregonians with housing solutions. As a volunteer member of the Advocacy Team at St Timothy's Episcopal Church in Brookings I am dedicated to addressing the housing crisis in our county and throughout the state. I am writing to you to advocate for the full funding and passage of HB 3482 to provide resources for non-profits, faith communities, tribal communities, housing authorities, and local governments in the process of developing affordable housing on their property.

Oregon is currently facing a housing crisis, driven by the fact that there are not enough housing units for Oregonians — especially those who are low to middle income. Oregon is currently short 110,000 housing units. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a worker making minimum wage in Oregon would need to work 82 hours per week to afford a 2-bedroom rental home at fair market rent. Over 230,000 of renter households in Oregon earn less than 50% of the average median income. Non-profits, faith communities, tribal communities, housing authorities, and some local governments are ready to assist the state with this crisis through building affordable housing on their developable land. However, there are obstacles to even starting these projects. These obstacles include lack of funding for starting costs, lack of staff and community resources with knowledge of housing development. HB 3482 would help to circumvent these barriers through providing funding and resources to community entities to ensure Oregon has affordable housing available and our friends and neighbors can obtain stable housing, one of the fundamental building blocks of healthy communities.

HB 3482 provides resources in two crucial areas for these groups — pre-development support and technical assistance. First, this bill will provide financial support for pre-development costs involved in developing affordable housing. This funding can cover a range of things from land surveys to community engagement efforts to build

neighbor congregation approval. On their own, these costs can often total over \$100,000 and prevent projects from getting off the ground. Giving organizations access to pre-development dollars will help to ensure that projects are able to get started without costs being a barrier. Second, HB 3482 will provide a resource to assist with project management. This would be done through the appointment of a non-profit organization with expertise in affordable housing development as well as the frameworks of community groups to guide communities through the development process. This organization will play a crucial role in informing the public about the availability of the grant program as well as serve as a resource in helping communities during project development.

Oregon is in the midst of a crisis that non-profits, faith communities, tribal communities, housing authorities, and local governments would like to help solve, but it cannot be done alone. We know that in making these investments through this bill, we can and will assist Oregon through providing more housing opportunities for those in most need around us. I hope you will join me in ensuring Oregonians have more access to affordable housing and give HB 3482 an “aye” vote.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Sincerely,

James L. Abbott