



Community Vision
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March 23, 2023

RE: House Bill 3309

Chair Dexter, Co-Vice Chair Gamba, Co-Vice Chair Helfrich, and members of the committee:

I am Allen Hines, Housing Access Director at Community Vision. Community Vision encourages you to support House Bill 3309.

Our program supports people with a variety of disabilities to find housing in the community. Since 2020, 70 participants have found housing with our support. Even with our experience, our relationships with dozens of property managers, and our database of hundreds of affordable housing properties, finding housing for people with disabilities is often challenging. Few options exist. Waitlists are long. And our participants with complex accessibility needs wait the longest – sometimes more than a year – to find housing that meets their needs.

We believe in supporting our participants to find housing that can be stable in the long term, knowing that many people with disabilities end up “making do” with inadequate housing. Making do might mean being unable to access parts of their homes, depending on others to prepare food due to inaccessible countertops or appliances, or crawling to access important areas, such as the bathroom. When people with disabilities lack the support for daily tasks they cannot do because their housing is inaccessible, their lives become smaller and focused on bare necessities. Additional challenges or emergencies can be the tipping point to homelessness.

The solution to these problems, broadly, is to ensure that the state’s housing supply is responsive to the needs of people with disabilities. House Bill 3309 is a step toward determining the unmet housing needs of people with disabilities and providing incentives for developers to meet those needs. The bill asks Oregon Housing and Community Services to study:

- the unmet need for accessible housing units
- state rules and building code standards relating to accessible housing
- the number and percentage of housing units funded by OHCS that are accessible.

This will provide local jurisdictions with baseline data related to accessible units, which is important for understanding trends and tailoring housing production strategies to meet growing needs. HB 3309 also calls on OHCS to establish incentives in housing development funding offerings to increase the quantity and quality of accessible units.

The disability community faces the most common impacts of the housing crisis, such as unaffordable rents, habitability concerns, and homelessness. Our housing search is further complicated because, by and large, we do not know where accessible housing units exist, what accessibility features they offer, and the unmet needs in communities across the state. We are hopeful that HB 3309 will help us find some answers and pave the way for more and better housing options for people with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continued discussions of this bill.

Sincerely,

Allen Hines
Housing Access Director
Community Vision