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To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

From: Cassidy Bolger - Director of Development at Killian Pacific, and Vice President of Oregon Smart Growth

Date: 02/08/2024

Re: Support for SB 1537

Oregon Smart Growth (OSG) is a coalition of developers, investors, and allied professionals committed to the feasible development of walkable, livable communities that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

Across the state – from big and mid-size cities to small, rural towns – Oregonians are straining under the pressure of an increasingly unaffordable housing market. Decades of underbuilding have left Oregon with a severe housing shortage. The state is currently behind by 140,000 housing units and needs to produce over 440,000 units in the next 20 years to meet demand.

There is no time to waste. Oregon must pass legislation this session to alleviate the housing and affordability crisis gripping our state. We urge the passing of Senate Bill 1537 and applaud Governor Kotek’s leadership on this issue. The Governor’s willingness to reach out to key stakeholders to refine Senate Bill 1537 ensures both its potency in addressing housing deficits and its flexibility. While the bill includes compromise, and thus is not perfect for any single interest group, we need to avoid allowing the perfect to be the enemy of the good. SB 1537 is a critical first step if we are truly prioritizing housing production.

Senate Bill 1537 would direct a \$500 million investment to:

- Fund new housing infrastructure projects,
- Encourage development on brownfields and other sites with readiness issues,
- Assist in site acquisition for low-to-moderate income housing,
- Create the Housing Accountability & Production Office (HAPO), to provide technical assistance and services to local governments and developers.

It would also allow housing developers desperately needed flexibility regarding local housing regulations. This section will not waive critical requirements such as fire codes, federal regulations, or regulations that protect the environment or natural resources.

Oregon Smart Growth agrees that establishing the Housing Accountability and Production Office will go a long way toward aligning local and state regulations to meet the needs of jurisdictions local or tribal, urban or rural, and small, medium and large. We hope that the timeline for implementing and making the HAPO operational can be accelerated - but coordinating a single point of entry is a worthy goal that will support housing production and development.

Oregon Smart Growth urges your Support of SB 1537.