

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development  
From: Eleanor Ponomareff, Talent City Council  
Subject: Opposition to SB 1537  
Date: February 8, 2024

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, Members of the Committee,

I am a member of the Talent City Council, now in my second term, testifying on behalf of myself, and my constituents.

I urge this committee to **amend SB 1537, and remove the UBG expansion provision**, which undermines the intent of an otherwise highly effective bill that will help small towns like Talent achieve our goals to provide affordable housing and promote climate friendly and equitable communities.

Here in Talent, we know first hand, the danger of **climate change**. The Labor Day fires of 2020 took 800 homes and 60 businesses, destroying roughly a third of our small town.

And we know about **housing insecurity**. Even before the fire, here in Talent we had a deficit of affordable housing options for hundreds of our residents, with ***close to half our renter population cost-burdened***.

In the years since the fire we have been building back, working to restore our small town to what it was before – a place where higher income folks and working families can share the same neighborhoods, attend the same schools, play in the same parks, and frequent the same cafes and food carts.

Much of what is in this bill will help us. We need to replace our aging infrastructure; we need to incentivize more affordable housing on vacant land within our city limits, close to our existing transit lines and services.

With help from the state, we can achieve these goals without sacrificing long standing rules designed to prevent urban sprawl, and the increased demand on infrastructure and damage to the environment that would come with it. The UBG loophole would effectively reverse much of what we are trying to create with climate friendly and equitable communities.

As one constituent said to me: *We moved to Talent because it wasn't an upper-middle class enclave; it was a real mix of people from every walk of life.* That's rare, and worth protecting.

To be clear, the larger part of this bill **supports** our work. The UBG expansion provision **undermines** it. Please amend the bill to **remove the UBG loophole**.

Thank you for your good work.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Ponomareff  
Talent City Council, Position #5  
Talent, Oregon