



Senate Housing and Development Committee
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

February 7th, 2024

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the committee,

SETA is a non-profit, public service organization dedicated to renters' rights and interests. We provide free community resources, including our free Tenant Hotline, and we directly serve about 250 renter households every month through combinations of several programs.

As renters, we have a vested interest in housing production as we bear the economic brunt of Oregon's dire lack of it. Access to affordable housing across Oregon is at an all-time low, and projections show that this will only worsen unless the state intervenes. We celebrate the much-needed housing infrastructure funding contained within SB 1537, we support the specific carveout for climate-smart housing, and we applaud the creation of the Housing Accountability and Production Office, as these steps will go towards resolving the gap of available housing.

Despite this, we are concerned with the provision that allows expansion of urban growth boundaries. Studies have shown that housing density supports a clean environment, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, prevents wealth disparities, and provides a myriad of other benefits for our communities. We recognize the barriers to qualifying for the UGB expansion that are contained within the bill and the requirements for affordable housing are positive measures to prevent abuse of this system. However, ultimately we wish the critically important infrastructure dollars provided by the bill were put to use within UGBs, where we believe nearly all Oregon cities still have buildable land available.

We urge you to remove the UGB expansions section from SB 1537, which can side-step Oregon's historic land-use laws. With that said, this bill is a net-positive and we think as written it will do good in addition to its harms. We support its passage. If you'd like to connect with me, please reach out to tmorris@springfieldeugenetenantassociation.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim", is positioned above a horizontal line that spans the width of the signature area.

Timothy Morris, Executive Director.