

Submitter: Nate Ember

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2138. I urge you to support this bill. I am an Oregonian and a housing-focused Architect who supports HB 2138, which will positively affect Oregon's housing shortage by legalizing more housing across the state with land already available in our cities and towns, cutting red tape that prevents working families from choosing homes that allow them to live affordably in their own communities.

As you know, middle housing fills in a much needed gap in housing options as a means to provide housing in existing neighborhoods and on a variety of local lots. Given the many challenges to building housing at this moment, this legislation will help remove barriers that keep more of this housing from being developed. Infill development supports local economies and creates vibrant neighborhoods that can better afford to provide public services and high-quality infrastructure. Situating new housing in these scenarios can easily become quite complicated given the many overlaying requirements imposed by local jurisdictions; this adds cost and risk which ultimately prevents people from building much needed housing at a price point the market can support. Our design firm helps clients try to navigate these challenges across the state, and we see the challenges, and the opportunities to remove them through simplification and standardization across the state.

We are also working on an OHCS grant-funded project to design prefabricated middle housing units that could and should work in many situations, but will certainly face many barriers where it comes to implementation in various communities.

This bill is much needed in terms of unlocking increased housing production, and it will enhance land owner freedom and opportunity at the same time.