

Submitter: Nate Ember  
On Behalf Of: Storyline Community and Ink Built Architecture  
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2964

Chair Marsh, Co-Vice Chair Anderson, Co-Vice Chair Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to providing Oregonians with affordable housing solutions. As an Architect dedicated to providing affordable housing and shelter across the state, I strongly advocate for the passage of HB 2964. We see a great need for sites that are located in great neighborhoods for the construction of much-needed affordable housing. We know that developers of affordable housing are best positioned to make projects work when land is contributed to make the costs work and be appealing for OHCS funding applications. Faith communities are ready to contribute the housing crisis using the land they already own because they see and support folx experiencing housing insecurity and houselessness in their neighborhoods.

As you know, healthy communities need stable, affordable housing, but we know that basic need is unreachable for so many Oregonians. Faith communities are prepared to step up and close this gap: We know of at least 60 acres of faith land throughout the state that are ready to be developed. However, because faith communities are often cash poor and land rich, we lack the money to do the upfront feasibility and community engagement work that readies our land for a developer to come in and build. HB 2964 offers a solution to this hurdle. It codifies and broadens eligibility in the OHCS Predevelopment Program and provides a grant option for those entities that are cash-poor and land rich. A grant option can be critical to groups like faith communities. This bill will provide a needed option to cover a range of things from land surveys to community engagement efforts to building neighborhood approval. On their own, these costs can often total upwards of \$100,000 and prevent projects from getting off the ground. Giving organizations access to pre-development grants will help to ensure that projects are able to move forward.

We hope you will help us unlock this land, so more Oregonians can unlock safe, affordable housing.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,  
Nate Ember, principal at Ink Built Architecture