



March 17, 2025

Chair Pham and Members of the Committee
Oregon Senate Committee on Housing

RE: **Support of Senate Bill 974-1**

Dear Chair Pham and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kelly Ritz, and I am a home builder building homes in Central Oregon and the Portland Metro Area. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of the amended version of Senate Bill 974-1, a critical piece of legislation that will streamline the approval process for residential projects and remove unnecessary barriers to housing production.

Oregon is facing a housing crisis. Families are struggling to find affordable places to live, and builders are facing regulatory roadblocks that delay much-needed housing projects. SB 974-1 is a pragmatic, commonsense solution that addresses these challenges by making the approval process more efficient and predictable on land inside the urban growth boundary.

Limited Land Use Decision for Residential Projects

One of the most effective ways to speed up housing production is by treating residential projects in areas already planned for housing as "limited land use decisions." This approach narrows the scope of review, reducing the potential for costly, drawn-out disputes that slow down development. If an area has been designated for housing, projects should not be subjected to redundant layers of scrutiny. Streamlining this process will allow builders to get to work faster and deliver homes to Oregon families sooner.

Reimbursement of Legal and Engineering Fees

Frivolous appeals are a major impediment to housing development, adding unnecessary costs and delays. SB 974-1 provides a fair and balanced solution by requiring reimbursement of legal and engineering fees for both permit applicants and local governments when a project is appealed but ultimately upheld. This ensures that builders are not unfairly burdened by costly legal battles, discouraging obstructionist tactics that stall much-needed housing projects.

120-Day Shot Clock for Certain Approvals

Time is money, and in the housing sector, unnecessary delays can make projects financially unviable. By implementing a 120-day "shot clock" for engineering and final plat approvals, SB 974-1 injects predictability into the process. I personally think this clock should be shorter than 120-days but this measure will keep projects on track, ensuring that housing developments move forward without avoidable bureaucratic slowdowns.

Elimination of Aesthetic Design Review

While quality design is important, the aesthetic review process often becomes a subjective and unnecessary hurdle that delays construction. SB 974-1 eliminates this additional layer of review, reducing approval timelines while

still allowing builders to meet established zoning and safety standards. Removing this requirement will help get homes built faster without compromising the integrity of our communities.

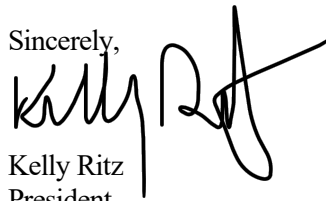
The Bottom Line: More Homes, Less Red Tape and the Ability to More Housing More Quickly to Address the Current Housing Emergency

SB 974-1 is about creating a more efficient, predictable, and development-friendly environment that prioritizes housing production. By cutting red tape and ensuring a fair permitting process, as well as shorting approval timelines, this bill encourages builders to take on new projects, increasing the housing supply and helping to address Oregon's affordability crisis and current housing emergency.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 974-1 and take meaningful action to remove unnecessary barriers to housing development. All Oregonians who value a place to call home are counting on us to act!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Ritz', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Kelly Ritz
President

Stone Bridge Homes NW, LLC