



the
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
in WESTERN OREGON

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

I am grateful for your ongoing commitment to providing Oregonians with affordable housing solutions.

As the Canon to the Ordinary of the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon and as a homeowner in Portland, I am committed and passionate about affordable housing and the future of our church communities. Much of my work is with congregations that are facing decline. Our conversations are centered around legacy and the possibility of being able to see that their love for their neighbors can live on even if their church must close its doors. These conversations are very powerful.

I am writing to you today to advocate for the passage of HB 2964. Healthy communities need stable, affordable housing, but we know that basic need is unreachable for so many Oregonians. Faith communities are prepared and eager to step up and close this gap: we know that at least 60 acres of faith land throughout the state that are currently 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. Faith land is often in coveted urban areas where land is scarce and the need for housing is great.

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 are ready, and we invite you to help us unlock this land, so more Oregonians can unlock safe, affordable housing.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

The Reverend Canon Christopher Craun