



PO Box 146
Pendleton, OR 97801
LandWise.pro
Oregon CCB# 258250
Office 541.429.4063
Cell 360.518.4103
scott@landwise.pro

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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Scott Smith, and I am an Oregon-based developer working directly on housing projects in rural and non-metro communities. I am writing to express my strong support for **SB 1566**.

Oregon is facing a real and growing housing shortage, particularly in rural communities where project margins are already thin and development risk is high. In recent years, interpretations by the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) have had the unintended consequence of stopping or severely altering affordable housing projects that communities urgently need. SB 1566 addresses these issues in a thoughtful and balanced way.

This bill provides much-needed clarity and flexibility while **maintaining worker protections**. Specifically, SB 1566:

- Exempts loans between public and private partners so financing structures do not unintentionally trigger prevailing wage across entire projects.
- Ensures that site infrastructure does not trigger prevailing wage requirements for otherwise private affordable housing construction.
- Allows limited on-site commercial uses, such as child care facilities, which are essential to working families.
- Removes barriers related to prior site use, enabling the redevelopment of former commercial or industrial sites into affordable housing.
- Maintains strict income requirements so exemptions apply only to true affordable housing.

SB 1566 also recognizes the economic realities of building in different parts of the state. Increasing thresholds in rural areas and allowing greater height in metro areas enables efficient design, structured parking, and better use of land—without sacrificing affordability or safety.

Importantly, this bill **does not eliminate prevailing wage protections**. Prevailing wage remains in place for actual public construction, and the exemptions apply only to affordable housing projects. Workers remain protected, while housing projects regain feasibility.

From a practical, on-the-ground perspective, SB 1566 is exactly the type of targeted, common-sense legislation Oregon needs. It allows affordable housing to move forward while respecting labor standards and protecting workers.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 1566 and help remove barriers that are preventing affordable housing from being built in communities across Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott M. Smith".

Scott Smith