



February 6, 2026

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for SB 1576

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of Home Forward in support of SB 1576. This bill represents an important and timely step toward addressing Oregon's persistent shortage of accessible housing. By ensuring that publicly funded rental housing includes a meaningful share of accessible units, this bill advances housing equity while strengthening the long-term resilience of Oregon's housing system.

Home Forward is the Public Housing Authority (PHA) for Multnomah County and the largest provider of affordable housing in Oregon. We serve approximately 18,000 low-income households through affordable housing, rent assistance, and supportive services. Home Forward owns more than 7,200 affordable homes throughout Multnomah County and provides services ranging from housing stability supports to health and wellness programming. In addition, we administer rent assistance for more than 12,000 households each month. Our mission is to create a better community by providing housing stability through affordable housing development, housing choice expansion, services that support quality of life, and advocacy to improve local and national housing systems.

Oregon is experiencing a significant demographic shift. By 2050, the number of Oregonians aged 65 and older is projected to increase by nearly 60 percent compared to 2022, a change that will fundamentally shape future housing needs. Aging is associated with a higher likelihood of mobility limitations and disability, and people with disabilities of all ages already face substantial barriers in accessing housing that meets their needs. Yet only a small share of Oregon's housing stock is built to accessibility standards that allow residents to age in place or live independently. As a result, many households are forced to move prematurely or remain in housing that does not adequately support their health, safety, or independence. Building more accessible housing upfront allows providers and the state to prepare for these changing demographics, avoid costly retrofits or crisis-driven interventions, and ensure that housing investments made today remain usable and effective for decades to come.


At Home Forward, it is our current practice to build to the accessibility thresholds outlined in SB 1576. This practice reflects the demonstrated needs of the population we serve, which includes older adults, people with disabilities, and households whose accessibility needs evolve over time.

Designing housing to higher accessibility standards from the outset allows us to better serve residents, reduce displacement caused by unit incompatibility, and maximize the long-term usability of publicly funded housing.

SB 1576 takes a proactive and fiscally responsible approach by embedding accessibility into the design of housing funded with public dollars. The accessibility standards outlined in this bill are aligned with federal standards that are already well known and followed by housing developers. Further, Disability Rights Oregon and Community Vision worked closely with Home Forward and other affordable housing developers to ensure that this bill is feasible to implement and does not result in unintended consequences.

Home Forward urges you to pass SB 1576. Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please feel free to contact me at (503) 348-1196 or christina.dirks@homeforward.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Dirks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christina Dirks
Director of Policy and Planning