



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 2001: Rep. Marsh comments

For the record, I'm Pam Marsh, State representative for House District 5, in southern Jackson County.

As a former planning commissioner and city councilor, I have great faith in our local communities and elected leaders. I support House Bill 2001 because it will provide a tool to help our planners create vibrant, diverse neighborhoods where residents of all ages can thrive.

There is no question that we need more housing in cities and towns across the state. Jackson and Josephine counties are among the most housing-stressed regions in the state.¹ Like other parts of both rural and urban Oregon, housing construction has fallen behind population growth, leading to a lack of availability and affordability across income levels.² In the Rogue Valley, housing construction is 31% below what is needed for population growth.³

There are several reasons for this, but a significant contributor is that the state's residential zoning is out of sync with the size, ages, and income levels of Oregon's families. While most families consist of 1-2 persons,⁴ most of our zoning is dedicated to detached single homes on their own lots. We need more housing that fits the needs and incomes of all Oregonians, so residents have the opportunity to live in neighborhoods near schools, stores, and other amenities – for the young family just starting out, and for the widow wanting to age in her own neighborhood. HB 2001 would do that, by allowing the "gentle infill" of middle housing types.

Many of our mature neighborhoods already reflect that social and physical diversity because it naturally evolved over time in response to the changing needs. My own home was built in 1902 as a single-family dwelling. Over the next hundred years the owners added to and modified the property. Now my 90-year old mother lives in a cottage in the back yard, a young couple with a baby lives in the apartment over the garage, and a 19-year old just entering college rents the attic studio. Strictly speaking, it's not R1 development anymore. But it is a far more interesting place to live and a much better use of land than when the house sat alone on a lot.

It's the Legislature's role to set our land use framework and to give local communities the tools needed to address the housing needs of all Oregonians – today and in the future. House Bill 2001 will generate more housing units. That's critical. But just as importantly, it will give planners an opportunity to reconsider the qualities that make a great neighborhood.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Pam Marsh

¹ 2016 American Communalilty Survey

² Josh Lehner, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, *Update on Rural Housing Affordability*, March 7, 2018.

³ Id., Oregon's Housing Supply, Jan., 29, 2019

⁴ From 2010 census: Grants Pass: 66% of households (HH) are 1-2 persons; Medford: 63% of HH are 1-2 persons