

I am a homeowner in Portland. I write in support of HB 2001.

I currently live in San Francisco. Before I moved here, however, I lived in Portland on-and-off for many years. It became my favorite city, and I plan to move back within the next year or two.

When I last lived in Portland in 2014–15, I was astonished at how much rents had spiked in the three years I was gone. I was paying double what I had paid before, for a smaller apartment, in an area with less demand. Of course, when I moved to San Francisco, I laughed at my earlier sticker shock—what I pay in rent here makes Portland rents look positively tame. But still, I watched rents and house prices climb higher and higher back in Portland. I watched what had happened to San Francisco slowly happen to Portland. The inexorable trend of urbanization has continued; white flight has receded; and people keep experiencing and wanting to live in our beautiful West Coast cities. Naturally, demand for housing has gone through the roof. Construction of new housing—supply—has not. And so prices have followed demand.

San Francisco is a cautionary tale, not a model. And the caution San Francisco offers is this: Let people build new homes where they want to live—in towns and cities—or else prices will go up, old residents will be forced out, and the city will become nothing more than a beautiful museum of perfectly preserved old homes where only the fabulously wealthy can live. And that caution applies not only to Portland, but to Eugene, to Bend, to Medford—to cities and towns all over Oregon.

HB 2001, as you know, would legalize fourplexes within many Oregonian cities and towns. I say "legalize," but of course, I should say "re-legalize"—they were legal for decades before they were made illegal for reasons largely to do with race. Those laws are a blemish on Oregon's ordinance books. That much alone is good reason to pass HB 2001. In addition, re-legalizing fourplexes would squarely address the supply problem—and thus lower housing prices for everyone.

I said at the beginning of this letter that I am a homeowner, and I say that specifically because I understand that many of my fellow homeowners—especially in Portland—are opposed to this bill. Most of these people have been blessed by the supply constriction. They have minted money as home prices have gone up by near-double-digit percentages every year. The last thing they want is for housing to be affordable—it already *is* for them, and they're making a killing off it being unaffordable for everyone else.

I dissent from this apparent homeowner consensus. It is more important that people have places to live, places that they can afford, places in the city where the carbon cost of living is a fraction what it is in the suburbs, than that my home acts as my investment vehicle for my retirement.

Please vote for HB 2001.

Regards,
Athul K. Acharya