



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

January 30, 2016

To: Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
Senator Sara Gelser, Chair
Senator Alan Olsen, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee
Email: shsec.exhibits@state.or.us

Re: SB 1533 – Inclusionary Zoning - SUPPORT

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. As one of many that opposed the preemption against the use of inclusionary zoning in 1999, we are pleased to support SB 1533 that would lift the ban. Local governments should have a choice of tools available to them to implement their vision of their own future.

We are particularly pleased to see that this legislation will apply to rental projects as well as homeownership. Half of the renters in Oregon are unable to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market value. While inclusionary zoning is only a part of the solution to Oregon's affordable housing crisis, it does offer communities one more tool in meeting the overwhelming need.

The League would prefer that the developer incentives on Page 1, lines 14-22 not be included in this bill. It is not that we do not support considerations to developers should this policy be adopted locally; however, local jurisdictions should be allowed to consider inclusionary zoning as part of a broader set of affordable housing policies. Each jurisdiction has a unique relationship with its development community and may want to use different mechanisms to assure affordable housing inclusion. The League urges the Legislature to give localities the freedom to make their own decisions on whether and how they implement the policy.

Throughout Oregon, families are burdened by high housing costs, making it difficult for them to cover other expenses including food, transportation, and medical care. Homelessness is not just a big city problem anymore. Cities and counties throughout the state are looking for solutions. By lifting the ban on inclusionary zoning, Oregon's cities and small towns would have the ability to add this to their affordable housing toolbox. It is not the solution to our housing crisis, but just one more option available for creating healthy diverse communities.

Inclusionary zoning ensures that a set percentage of units in a development is affordable to households below a certain income level. The tool is flexible and can be tailored to meet each community's needs. Cities throughout the U.S. have used this tool for a

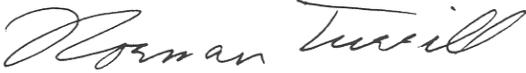
number of years. Oregon municipalities choosing to employ inclusionary zoning will benefit from the lessons learned elsewhere.

There is increasing recognition that living in high opportunity areas close to excellent schools, transportation options, and good jobs contributes to a family's success. This planning tool increases housing options for lower income families in high opportunity areas. Successful parents and children contribute to a community's overall wellbeing, reduce the burden on social services, and increase public safety. Furthermore, when affordable housing options are available close to jobs, traffic congestion, pollution, and commute times are reduced.

Making this basic planning tool available to local jurisdictions will enable those who choose to use it the ability to ensure affordable housing in their implementation of Statewide Planning Goal 10: Housing. The League believes we can live in a state where everyone has access to opportunity and a decent, stable, affordable place to call home. By giving local communities the tools they need, including the choice to use inclusionary zoning, we can create an Oregon with a better future for all of us.

We ask for your SUPPORT for SB 1533 to allow local jurisdictions the opportunity to have this conversation at the local level.

Sincerely,


Norman Turrill
LWVOR President


Debbie Aiona
Affordable Housing Portfolio