March 13, 2017

Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Housing regarding House Bill 2007.

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Committee Members,

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit educational organization with 850 members that provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change.

Our organization has reviewed House Bill 2007, and while we’re neutral on the bill as drafted, we raise a number of issues in this testimony for your consideration.

Section 1. OAPA believes this section needs some clarification on priority. Is the intent to fast-track permit applications that include affordable housing, or would they move to the front of the permit line? As written, this section would require permits to be processed in the same manner as other land use permits are under ORS 215 and 227. With respect to Section 1 (4), we raise the question on how a city would comply with this change to show at least 10 percent of its housing stock would qualify as affordable housing. Would compliance with (4) require a city to conduct and adopt an inventory of this type of housing before the changes in state law became effective?

Sections 3 through 5 include some good ideas, particularly directing the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services (OHCS) to develop plans that could be pre-approved for building permits. OAPA raises a clarifying with respect to Section 3(5)(b); what is meant by OHCS identifying appropriate zones within which the design may be developed? Is this intended to refer to types of zones, or an actual inventory of zones in which a pre-approved plan may be constructed? If this is correct, we recommend close coordination between OHCS, cities, and counties to ensure they have accurate information on what zones would allow the types of housing for which OHCS have developed plans. OAPA also recommends close coordination with the Department of Consumer and Business Services to ensure the approved plans are approvable for buildings permits when submitted to a local government.
OAPA has a number of questions on Sections 7 and 8 of the bill. These sections would amend ORS 227.500 and ORS 215.441 regarding the provision of housing along with a church. Some of these changes appear to be housekeeping and/or editing; would either a city or a county need to amend its zoning and developed code to comply so affordable housing and some associated support services could be allowed with a church? If so, would land division and other development standards need to be reviewed? We raise these questions because allowing affordable housing to be built with a church raises potential development code and building issues that should be addressed up front.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on HB 2007. We would appreciate the opportunity to work with the bill sponsors and consider amendments to the bill.

Sincerely,

Jeannine Rustad, JD, President
Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association