



December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

To: City of Gresham Mayor and Council

**RE: Concern for 11/21/2023 Appeal Fee Waiver Decision**

Mayor Stovall and City Councilors,

I am writing on behalf of the Home Building Association (HBA) and our thousands of members who build the housing and jobs that make our region livable and economically vibrant.

We would like to express our concern over the 11/21/2023 council decision to approve by resolution an appeal fee waiver for a recent land use decision. Not only are we alarmed at the dangerous precedent this could set for Gresham (and other cities) in future land use appeals, we fear that this will open up more justifiable housing projects to unnecessary and groundless appeals and litigation. At a moment when the approval of new housing has become exceedingly time consuming and litigious, cities should be lowering barriers to housing developments, not carving out new paths for anti-growth obstruction.

Another cause for unease is the process by which this resolution was approved—with virtually zero public outreach and feedback. The ad hoc resolution was made without public notice and did not appear on a council agenda for prior review. We believe council would've been well advised to hear testimony from others beyond those who adamantly oppose the construction of new housing in Gresham.

Looking forward, there may be more people coming forward at Planning Commission meetings opposing to both city and developer-proposed projects. Even without credible source for objection, these individuals or groups could now have standing and make a case in front of City Council to waive an applicable appeal fee, as they did in November. Clearing the path for NIMBYism for its own sake is not a solution to our housing affordability problems. Increased ability and likelihood of appeals will stymie new construction across the region and state.

We believe that Gresham's long-earned reputation for thoughtful collaboration and pro-housing solutions should encourage council reconsider its decision to waive fees for appeals on housing. We urge you add this item to a future council meeting and have a more thorough, publicly accessible deliberation about the impact that this decision will have on the affordability of future housing starts.

Thank you for your consideration,

**Preston Korst**

Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs  
Home Building Association of Greater Portland