



Home Builders Association
of Metropolitan Portland

May 7, 2020

Eli Spevak, Chair
Planning and Sustainability Commission
1900 SW 4th Ave
Portland, OR 97201

Re: Support for the Expiration Date Extension Project

Dear Chair Spevak,

The Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland (“HBA”) represents over 800 businesses and tens of thousands of women and men who work in the residential building and remodeling industries throughout the greater Portland area. We are dedicated to maximizing housing choice for all who reside in the region while promoting housing access and availability for everyone.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing severe economic disruption throughout the Portland region and Oregon. Home building, like many industries, is facing an uncertain future. Nationwide, home construction in March suffered its worst monthly decline since 1984 as housing starts fell by over 22% from the previous month. This downturn in construction is attributed to many factors including, but not limited to, supply chain interruptions for material coming from East Asia, reductions in available capital, and wavering consumer demand.

Despite the economic downturn, Oregonians continue to desperately need new housing. A recent report showed the state underproduced 155,000 units of housing since the Great Recession. This failure forces Oregon families to compete for ever scarce housing, which in turn drives up costs, delays family formations, and inhibits growth.

Given the trying combination of the current economic outlook and the pressing need for new housing to meet Oregonians needs, the City of Portland should adopt and implement the Expiration Date Extension Project (“EDEP”). Doing so will help ensure that builders can finish constructing housing currently in the project pipeline and that neighborhood contact meetings can continue during the COVID-19 pandemic.

EDEP is similar to land use review code amendments that were adopted during the last economic recession after the 2008 market crash. Importantly, it will serve to help stabilize market forces, ensuring that Portland continues to see critically needed new housing come to fruition. Particularly given the recent adoption of Better Housing By Design, the impending re-adoption of

Central City 2035, and the likely adoption of the Residential Infill Project, Portland must ensure that there are mechanisms in place to foster and encourage the creation of new housing. EDEP does just that while striking an appropriate balance between extending existing approvals and ensuring project-based community engagement. We thank the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability staff for bringing forward EDEP at this time and sincerely hope you will adopt it in an expeditious manner.

Sincerely,

Ezra Hammer
Vice President, Policy and Government Affairs

Cc: Steph Routh, Vice Chair
Katherine Schultz, Vice Chair
Jeff Bachrach, Commissioner
Ben Bortolazzo, Commissioner
Mike Houck, Commissioner
Katie Larsell, Commissioner
Oriana Magnera, Commissioner
Daisy Quiñonez, Commissioner
Chris Smith, Commissioner