



Sightline Institute is an independent think tank working to advance sustainability in the Pacific Northwest. We believe it exists at the intersection of environmental health and social justice.

We're writing **in support of the Shelter to Housing Continuum project**, the latest in a series of much-needed reforms that will put downward pressure on the price of housing in Portland, up and down the cost spectrum.

Better Housing by Design, the Residential Infill Project, and Expanding Opportunities for Affordable Housing share a common thread with this project. They all look for ways to let more people voluntarily create homes and shelters in more situations. **Lifting bans on lower-cost housing and shelter types is not the only ingredient in a solution to our housing crisis, but it is an essential one.**

In thinking about how Portland can deal with its current housing crisis, it can be useful to look at the ways we dealt with past crises. For example, a dip into the now-public data of the 1930 Census shows how many buildings in Portland were being used for shared housing in those days before group homes were banned from much of the city.

Legalizing ways for very poor people to live more comfortably does not eliminate poverty. Neither, obviously, does banning the ways very poor people can live more comfortably. The best approach is to make it legal for people to live more comfortably without harming others, and simultaneously working to eliminate poverty by boosting people's incomes through job access and direct payments. Opponents of this proposal fail to bring their own better options.

We endorse the positions in the coalition letter from Portland: Neighbors Welcome and others. Most importantly, we urge you to pass this much-needed package of reforms quickly.

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