December 20, 2022

Dear Legislators:

We, the undersigned, believe the facts are clear: Washington state is suffering a housing crisis brought about by a significant shortage of homes. This crisis rises to the level of an emergency and demands strong state action.

The housing crisis, which has been growing worse for more than a decade, manifests in several ways harmful to our state and its citizens:

- The lack of affordable housing is especially damaging to low-income families as their rents have risen much faster than their incomes – more families have become rent-burdened, and more families continue to become homeless as a consequence.

- Older adults, especially those on fixed incomes, face unique housing challenges and threats to aging in place in the communities they prefer.

- Traditional and systemic means of discrimination against BIPOC families and especially Black families are being perpetuated in ways that severely limit BIPOC homeownership which remains a fraction of white family ownership.

- Lack of access to workforce housing encourages housing sprawl along with the concomitant environmental damage and the permanent loss of food-producing lands.

- Underproduction of new homes is a material factor in slowing economic growth.

Accordingly, we support strong state action by the 2023 Legislative Session in the following areas:

- Enactment of zoning reforms that will enable increased production of homes, and especially more home choices in proximity to jobs, schools, transit, and services – such as Middle Housing, ADU’s, and Transit Oriented Development.

- Enactment of equity-based measures designed to increase all forms of homeownership, with a focus on BIPOC family homeownership to help close the racial wealth gap, which is largely a consequence of the housing gap.

- Enactment of measures designed to lower the costs of construction such as permitting reform and condominium liability reform.

- A significant increase in public sector investment in affordable housing and other housing stability programs.

The magnitude of the challenge is great and requires a response commensurate in size – comprehensive and ambitious. We need to build a lot more housing opportunities for all our neighbors and we must act now.
Sincerely,

Yasmin Trudeau  
Senator

Senator Noel Frame  
Senator Liz Lovelett  
Senator Sharon Shewmake  
Senator Jeff Wilson  
Senator Lisa Wellman  
Senator Claire Wilson  
Representative My-Linh Thai

(In alphabetical order)

AARP Washington  
Amazon  
American Farmland Trust  
Building Industry Association of Washington  
Climate Solutions  
Fuse Washington  
Futurewise  
Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King & Kittitas Counties  
Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County  
Master Builders of King and Snohomish Counties  
Microsoft Corporation  
Natural and Built Environments LLC  
Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce  
SEIU 1199NW  
SEIU 775  
SEIU 925  
Sierra Club Washington State  
Sightline Institute  
Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium  
Tacoma Housing Authority  
Washington Build Back Black Alliance  
Washington Homeownership Resource Center  
Washington Low Income Housing Alliance  
Washington Realtors  
Washington State Community Action Partnership  
Washington State Labor Council  
AFL-CIO