



Preserving real estate to build stronger communities

HB19 - 1245 – Now is the Time to Support Coloradans

April 25, 2019

An Open Letter to the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of Urban Land Conservancy (ULC), I am writing to voice our strong support of House Bill 19-1245, which would create a dedicated source of funding for affordable housing through a vendor fee modification. HB 1245 is not a new tax and is not connected to TABOR in any fashion. In fact, this resourceful piece of legislation provides an exceptional opportunity to address our State's affordable housing crisis without burdening Colorado taxpayers.

To date, Colorado is one of the last remaining states without a dedicated source of funding for affordable housing. Yet according to the U.S. Census Bureau, we are one of the top 10 states experiencing rapid population growth – an influx that without proactive measures in place can put even greater stress on Colorado's housing, infrastructure and quality of life. Today, more than 200,000 households in Colorado are severely cost burdened (spending more than 50% of their income on housing). As rent and home prices continue to drastically outpace wages, we need to find a solution to address the State's growing inequality.

ULC is a real estate based nonprofit with a long history in Colorado of making strategic investments for the preservation and development of permanently affordable housing. To date, ULC has invested over \$100 million in community beneficial real estate, leveraging an additional \$700 million from public and private partners for long-term community benefits. Despite our economic successes, we are among many organizations across the State unable to keep up with the demand for affordable housing, and our local residents are forced to pay the price. Across the State, cost-burdened households are faced with the daily challenge of how to make ends meet, which often leads to displacement and in some dire situations – homelessness.

In 2018, ULC commissioned a report to assess the economic impact of affordable housing located along major transit corridors on the metro Denver economy. In response, Shift Research Lab published "[the Economic Impact of Affordable Housing in TODs in Metro Denver.](#)" The findings illustrated the significant impact affordable housing development has on our local economy. In 2017, total spending on construction and rehabilitation of transit oriented affordable housing topped \$200 million, which created 5,336 full and part-time jobs and led to over \$125 million in earnings for Coloradans. These developments also spurred nearly \$220 million in economic activity throughout the metro region. Passing HB 1245 will increase housing options for Coloradoans, and immediately spur economic activity throughout the State.

Now that HB 1245 passed through the House, we ask that you join us in supporting this revenue neutral bill that will provide essential funds annually for the preservation and creation of affordable rental and for sale housing, spur economic development and create thousands of jobs. We are urging bipartisan support for Colorado's first statewide fund dedicated to affordable housing, with the understanding that for hundreds of thousands of Colorado residents, time is truly of the essence. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at: aaron@urbanlandc.org or 720.699.0313.

Sincerely,


Aaron Mirjop, President & CEO,
Urban Land Conservancy