



Pend Oreille County

Board of Commissioners

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July 31, 2017

Mr. Ray Pierre, Chair
Pend Oreille County Economic Development Council
301 Spruce Street
Newport, WA 99156

Dear Ray:

As we've discussed Pend Oreille County is facing a critical housing shortage that is limiting the ability of new employees to find housing in our community. In addition, this shortage, if not addressed, has the potential to undermine our efforts to attract new businesses into our county. Given the economic development implications that this housing shortage presents, the Board of County of Commissioners is asking the EDC to establish and provide staff support to a housing opportunity working group. We'd like you to reach out to and engage local realtors, developers, contractors, property owners, social service organizations, planners, utility providers, suppliers, trade groups, training organizations, and any other local organizations or individuals that have an interest in making sure that we have a wide range of housing opportunities available in our community.

Specifically, we'd like the housing opportunity work group to address the following questions:

1. To what extent is there vacant housing to rent or purchase in the community? How serious is the existing shortage?
2. To what extent is there the ability to add new housing under existing conditions?
3. What, if anything, can be done to encourage/facilitate the construction of new housing opportunities throughout the county?

In addition to these questions, if our county is selected as the site for a new large scale, economic development project, we hope that the working group will be the forum to share information about the additional need for temporary and permanent housing to support this new development.

We have heard from local employers that the housing shortage is of critical importance now, and, we ask that you convene the first meeting of the working group immediately and that you provide us with regular briefings on your findings and recommendations. Please encourage Jamie to utilize Commissioner Manus, Greg Snow, and Gregg Dohrn as resources in getting the working group started.

The leadership of the EDC in addressing this housing shortage is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

PEND OREILLE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Karen Skoog, Chair



Stephen Kiss, Vice-Chair



Mike Manus, Member

cc: Greg Snow
Gregg Dohrn
Assessor Jim McCroskey
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