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BIAW urges action by Gov. Inslee to tackle housing crisis

Letter to governor outlines critical steps to ease Washington's housing shortage

OLYMPIA...The Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW) today urged Gov. Jay Inslee to take serious steps to ease the housing supply shortage [after the governor raised the issue](#) in his recent media availability.

"It was great to hear that the governor understands we have a housing shortage," said Greg Lane, Executive Vice President of the Building Industry Association of Washington. "Now, we hope he will back up those words with meaningful action to address the crisis. We're offering him real solutions that will make a real difference to control housing costs."

Lane [sent a letter to Inslee](#) today on behalf of roughly 8,000 BIAW members. [The letter](#) outlines the problem and offers proposals to help increase housing supply and ease the pressures causing housing prices and rents to skyrocket.

"As you pointed out in your remarks, our state has woefully under-produced housing [and millions of Washington families can't afford to buy a median-priced home](#), even if they could find one," BIAW's letter says. "Washington needs [nearly 270,000 new homes](#) to meet current buyer demand. Yet the state is producing the fewest housing units per household in the country. We welcome the opportunity to engage with you on this critical issue and are willing to meet with you and your policy team as soon as possible to discuss real solutions to address this crisis."

Housing crisis grows more urgent every day

In April 2022, the median home sales price was \$643,400. At that price point, [85% of Washington households](#) cannot afford the opportunity to build wealth and secure a better future for their families.

To buy a home at that price, a family needs an income of \$171,890 to qualify for a mortgage—and Washington's median household income is just over \$77,000.

Every time government adds another \$1,000 in costs, 4,068 of our neighbors are priced out of the opportunity to purchase a home.

"Simply put, every time government makes housing more expensive, more families will not have access to attain home ownership," BIAW's letter points out.

In his news conference, Inslee recognized the state's population is continuing to grow.

"We're going to need the Legislature next year to step up to the plate to remove some of the restrictions that are presently stopping us from building housing...," Inslee said in his news conference.

"If people want to reduce homelessness, they are going to have to get behind this effort to give us a place to build housing."

He then described planning meetings with the Legislature and the Washington Association of Cities. BIAW's letter urges Inslee to take the problem to the people who can best address it: Washington's home building industry.

"We also believe this issue is one of great moral and economic significance, so let's have an honest conversation about why Washington's builders are no longer able to build homes the people of Washington can afford," the letter says.

Build homes, not barriers

BIAW's letter urges Inslee to address the barriers that block home building in Washington:

- Reduce permit delays
- Eliminate unnecessary costs and fees
- Increase zoning flexibility
- Reform the state's Growth Management Act.

"Washington builders must have the opportunity to build more homes to make housing more accessible for everyone and home ownership more equitable," Lane said. "Homeownership is still the number one way to build generational wealth across all demographics in America, and more Washingtonians need the opportunity to do just that."

As we met during the early stages of the pandemic to get the construction industry working safely again, BIAW is ready to meet with the governor and his staff on their proposals or other policy options to address the housing crisis, said Lane.

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The Building Industry Association of Washington is the voice of the housing industry as the state's largest trade association with nearly 8,000 member companies. The association is dedicated to ensuring and enhancing the vitality of the building industry so more Washington families can enjoy the American Dream of owning a home. Learn more at: www.biaw.com