



## **Open New York Testimony for the 2024 Joint Legislative**

### **Budget Hearing on Housing**

**February 14, 2024**

Thank you, Chair Weinstein and Chair Krueger, for the opportunity to share testimony in response to the Executive Budget. My name is Annemarie Gray and I serve as the Executive Director of Open New York. Open New York is an independent, grassroots, pro-housing nonprofit with hundreds of volunteer members across the state.

As I testified last year, New York is experiencing a dire housing crisis that has real and direct human consequences: high rents, displacement, segregation, tenant harassment, homelessness, and countless other problems. A key reason why New York has failed to produce enough housing over the past 30 years is the lack of a statewide framework for promoting housing growth and affordability. Unlike many other states, New York



allows local governments absolute power to ban housing growth, which perpetuates and worsens our housing crisis each year.

The proposals in the Executive Budget are encouraging and would add new homes to fill New York's gap by developing housing on State property, prioritizing State funding to pro-housing communities, and providing New York City with the tools it needs to increase housing production. However, we do not believe that these proposals go far enough.

The Legislature must come to the table with strong solutions that ensure all parts of the state are building new homes and helping to solve the state's housing affordability crisis. In addition to the Governor's proposals, we can take meaningful steps this year to advance pro-housing measures, such as the Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act (S7791/A8386), which empowers religious organizations to develop affordable housing on their properties. We also believe proposals to reform environmental review practices (S925A/A4933A) and building design (S6573/A7322)



can help clear away some of the major hurdles to building multi-family housing in an affordable way.

We strongly believe in an “all-of-the-above” approach to solving our housing crisis; reforms to dramatically increase our supply of homes also must be paired with stronger tenant protections for those who are struggling to pay rent now and with increased funding to support government capacity for investing and innovating in the creation of affordable housing.

Truly addressing our housing affordability crisis will require a multi-year commitment from all levels of government, and there is no more time to waste. Albany must start taking action now.

Thank you for your time.