



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Ben Bulkeley, Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce

Phone: 207-772-2811 ext. 233; [bbulkeley@portlandregion.com](mailto:bbulkeley@portlandregion.com)

### **Study shows that Question 2 would severely limit growth, jobs, and affordable housing in Portland**

Avesta Housing and the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce reviewed recent and current development projects and, based on future projections, determined that if voters pass Portland's Question 2 on November 7, it would have a serious and negative impact on growth in Portland and the region.

The review looked at Portland development projects made possible by zone changes that were completed in the last five years, are currently being permitted for construction, permitted to begin construction, or under construction. The findings indicate the projects represent:

- Nearly \$1.4 billion in value
- 2,600 units of much needed housing
- Nearly 33,000 construction jobs

If Question 2 passes, it could put some of these future projects in jeopardy by allowing a minority of abutters to overturn the democratic process by which projects are approved. Portland's Question 2 would change the City Code and allow 25 percent of registered voters abutting a project (within 500 feet) veto power over proposed zoning text changes or zoning map amendments. If passed, the veto power would be in the hands of a relatively small number of residents, without input from the planning board, Portland City Council, or the remaining residents of Portland.

"Portland has come a long way in the past 30 years and has continued to pick up steam as a hub of culture and economic activity for the Greater Portland area and indeed the entire state," said Quincy Hentzel, Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce CEO. "We still have our challenges, such as work force capacity, job creation and business investment, and therefore need to continue to advance Portland on its path to progress. If Question 2 passes, it would stop that growth in its tracks."

The Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce has come out against Question 2, citing the effect it would have on important community resources, such as affordable housing developments, hospital expansions, and the proposed cold storage facility.

The potential for a small number of abutters to potentially derail essential projects would slow the investment momentum Portland is currently enjoying, and serve to make the housing shortage worse.

This conclusion is supported by Dana Totman, President and CEO of Avesta Housing. “Question 2 would stifle and block development in the city of Portland, particularly when it comes to affordable housing – which often requires a zoning change. I am frankly not surprised about the \$1.5 billion in projects relying on zone changes, as the majority of affordable housing developments in Portland have needed minor zone changes.”

#### *About Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce*

*The Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce is the largest business membership and advocacy organization in the Portland Regional. It represents more than 1,250 member businesses and organizations and more than 65,000 employees throughout the Portland Region. For more information, visit [www.portlandregion.com](http://www.portlandregion.com)*

#### *About Avesta Housing*

*Avesta Housing is a nonprofit affordable housing provider with over 40 years of experience as a leader in affordable housing development and property management in southern Maine and New Hampshire. The organization is headquartered in Portland, Maine and currently has more than 80 properties and 2,400 apartments in its portfolio. Avesta’s mission is to improve lives and strengthen communities by promoting and providing quality affordable homes for people in need. Its five areas of focus are advocacy, development, property management, home ownership, and assisted living.*  
[www.AvestaHousing.org](http://www.AvestaHousing.org)

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