



# Denny Heck

## Lieutenant Governor



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**Olympia** – Sen. Yasmin Trudeau (D-Tacoma), in collaboration with Lt. Governor Denny Heck and a diverse group of stakeholders, sent a letter to Washington legislators urging significant action be taken to address the housing supply shortage during the 2023 legislative session.

*"Sometimes finding a consensus in politics can feel impossible, but the affordable housing crisis impacting people across our state has no political affiliation," Trudeau said. "This coalition of key stakeholders, often with competing interests, has banded together to treat our housing crisis like the emergency it is. Collaboratively working to remedy this crisis will benefit every person and community. By lowering barriers to housing supply, we can address the need for affordable housing for our working families. Furthermore, the housing market won't continue to push people into homelessness."*

The letter is a response to the issues highlighted in the 2022 business competitiveness analysis "[Redefining Economic Success in Washington State: 3 Keys to Quality Growth](#)" conducted by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, under the auspices of the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations. The report revealed the startling statistic that Washington State has the fewest number of housing units per household of any state in the country, and recognized housing as the top barrier to business growth in Washington state.

Washington state has grappled with an appropriate response to the issue of housing supply for some time, but the pandemic heightened the impacts of housing shortage in unprecedented ways. In the recent years the legislature has attempted to address the issue, including a \$440 million appropriation from the 2022 capital budget and \$350 million appropriation from the 2021 capitol budget, but the coalition is pushing for the legislature to address the issue commensurate to the problem at hand.

*"Access to homeownership is one of the primary ways to build wealth in the United States," said Lt. Governor Denny Heck. "We also know it's one of the largest economic drivers and considerations for attracting businesses to our state, yet we still have not addressed the issue of housing to the degree needed. I am proud to partner with a leader like Sen. Trudeau and bring together unlikely companions in the housing industry to produce change for the people of Washington State. I am hopeful our combined action will produce significant results for an unprecedented issue."*

The full letter is attached and below.

*Dear Legislators:*

*We, the undersigned, believe the facts are clear: Washington state is suffering a housing crisis brought about by a significant shortage of homes. This crisis rises to the level of an emergency and demands strong state action.*

*The housing crisis, which has been growing worse for more than a decade, manifests in several ways harmful to our state and its citizens:*

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Chairman, Committee on Rules

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*The lack of affordable housing is especially damaging to low-income families as their rents have risen much faster than their incomes – more families have become rent-burdened, and more families continue to become homeless as a consequence.*

*Older adults, especially those on fixed incomes, face unique housing challenges and threats to aging in place in the communities they prefer.*

*Traditional and systemic means of discrimination against BIPOC families and especially Black families are being perpetuated in ways that severely limit BIPOC homeownership which remains a fraction of white family ownership.*

*Lack of access to workforce housing encourages housing sprawl along with the concomitant environmental damage and the permanent loss of food-producing lands.*

*Underproduction of new homes is a material factor in slowing economic growth.*

*Accordingly, we support strong state action by the 2023 Legislative Session in the following areas:*

*Enactment of zoning reforms that will enable increased production of homes, and especially more home choices in proximity to jobs, schools, transit, and services – such as Middle Housing, ADU's, and Transit Oriented Development.*

*Enactment of equity-based measures designed to increase all forms of homeownership, with a focus on BIPOC family homeownership to help close the racial wealth gap, which is largely a consequence of the housing gap.*

*Enactment of measures designed to lower the costs of construction such as permitting reform and condominium liability reform.*

*A significant increase in public sector investment in affordable housing and other housing stability programs.*

*The magnitude of the challenge is great and requires a response commensurate in size – comprehensive and ambitious. We need to build a lot more housing opportunities for all our neighbors and we must act now.*

*Sincerely,*

*Yasmin Trudeau*  
*State Senator*

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Chairman, Committee on Rules

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*(In alphabetical order)*

**AARP Washington**  
**Amazon**  
**American Farmland Trust**  
**Building Industry Association of Washington**  
**Climate Solutions**  
**Fuse Washington**  
**Futurewise**  
**Habitat for Humanity Seattle-King & Kittitas Counties**  
**Housing Development Consortium of Seattle-King County**  
**Master Builders of King and Snohomish Counties**  
**Microsoft Corporation**  
**Natural and Built Environments LLC**  
**Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce**  
**SEIU 1199NW**  
**SEIU 775**  
**SEIU 925**  
**Sierra Club Washington State**  
**Sightline Institute**  
**Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium**  
**Tacoma Housing Authority**  
**Washington Build Back Black Alliance**  
**Washington Homeownership Resource Center**  
**Washington Low Income Housing Alliance**  
**Washington Realtors**  
**Washington State Community Action Partnership**  
**Washington State Labor Council AFL-CIO**