

From: Peggy Moretti [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2015 2:33 PM
To: Ross Cheyenne; Sen Boquist; Sen Courtney; Sen MonnesAnderson; Sen Olsen
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Support SB 85 and increased seismic safety

February 26, 2015

Veterans & Emergency Preparedness Committee

Re. Support for SB 85 and Increased Seismic Safety

Dear Members of the Committee:

Restore Oregon is a statewide non-profit whose mission is to Preserve, Reuse, and Pass Forward Oregon's Historic Resources. We urge your support of SB 85, both as a public safety initiative and as an important component of historic preservation. A large percent of Oregon's historic buildings are URMs and the high cost of seismic upgrades are keeping many of them from being rehabilitated and adapted for new uses. Even many that have been spruced up remain completely vulnerable to an earthquake (picture downtown Jacksonville for instance.)

Earthquakes and seismic safety are like the weather: Everyone talks about it, but nobody does anything about it. This bill provides a modest step of much-needed action.

My organization spent an entire year studying historic unreinforced masonry buildings (URMs) and the challenges of having them seismically upgraded. You can find our Special Report on Resilient Masonry Buildings at http://restoreoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/UPDATED-RO-Special-Report-Masonry-Bldgs-Final_print.pdf.

Our recommendations included:

1. Educate Building Owners and Contractors on Best Practices for Historic Masonry Buildings.
2. Inventory Unreinforced Masonry Buildings so Communities Know What They Have.
3. Boost Public Demand for Seismic Upgrades by Rewarding Resilience.
4. Leverage Existing Federal Programs to Foster Upgrades.
- 5. Adopt Meaningful State Rehabilitation Incentives.**
6. Increase Availability of Finance and Insurance Options.
7. Institute Changes to the State Building Code to Allow for Phased Upgrades.
8. Government Agencies Must Take Care of Their Own URMs.

SB 85 provides a tool to address needed financial incentives. Without more financial tools available to private property owners, upgrades will not happen. Seismic reinforcement can run \$25 - \$75 per square foot and add 25% to rehab costs. And unfortunately, tenants aren't inclined to pay higher rents for their seismic safety the way they will pay more for green buildings.

It's time to move out of talk mode and into action on seismic safety. SB 85 is a start.

Thank you for your consideration.



Peggy Moretti
Executive Director, Restore Oregon



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Please note that another worthy bill, the Revitalize Main Street Act (SB 565), will also provide some modest support for seismic upgrades on historic buildings as part of an economic development initiative for Oregon's historic downtowns.