

March 3, 2015

Re: SB565 Revitalize Main Street Act/State Historic Tax Credits

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Sharon Konopa, Mayor of Albany, and I am here to seek your support of SB565, as it is time our state fully commits to a commonly used financing mechanism for historic preservation. Our state of Oregon has a disadvantage compared to 35 states across our nation, which already provide State Historic Tax Credits.

There are many countries throughout our world, who have preserved their past with a wide variety of architectural designs, many beautiful ornate structures and over a thousand years old. Our own nation on the east coast has historic structures over 300 years old, including significant government buildings. This shines on the many committed government leaders who made sure their future citizens can experience the history of our country. As Oregon should be doing the same on the west coast.

In Albany, we are proud of having one of the largest variety of historic stock in the state. We value our history and preserve our past. Albany has a successful urban renewal district that provides financial assistance to support significant historic buildings with their revitalization. What I have found is a missing piece with some challenging structures, by not having an option for additional financing assistance in order to make a project feasible.

Revitalization of historic structures usually cost more than new construction, yet can lessen the burden on the costs associated with urban sprawl. There is less capital needed to support capacity projects for water and wastewater lines, less demand for expanding the transportation system, the increase of public facilities, and historic revitalization slows the pressures of urban sprawl on farm and forest lands.

To expect the free market will revitalize all of our historic structures without any assistance is why we have many historic structures in dismay across Oregon. If it was more feasible to revitalize historic structures compared to new construction, we would not be here today asking for your support of this bill.

Every city across the nation can construct new buildings and most likely they all look the same. But nothing can replace the beauty of a historic structure. Our history is Oregon's character and identity, the same as Chicago, New Orleans or the Capitol of our country. Also, historic structures is a major piece of tourism in our state.

Please support and move forward SB565. The pressure is on you now to commit to preserving our past, as this financing tool request will not go away. Let's not wait until Oregon ends up being the last state in the nation to financially commit to historic preservation.

Thank you for your consideration,



Sharon Konopa
Mayor of Albany

(632 35th Ave SE, Albany, OR 97322—541-926-6812)

MEASURE: SB 565
EXHIBIT: 3
Senate Finance and Revenue 78th Session
DATE: 3/4/15 PAGES: 2
SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Konopa - Albany

Testimony to Senate Finance Committee in support of SB 565 The Revitalize Main Street Act

Dear Senators,

My name is Rod Porsche, Executive Director of the Albany Downtown Association. Passage of The Revitalize Main Street Act would be a game changer for our Historic Downtown District. Albany takes great pride in the 700 historic homes and commercial buildings in 3 historic districts surrounding our downtown.

While we've seen many of our downtown commercial buildings being restored in the past decade, there are still several key properties that would benefit from the legislation before you, most notably the St. Francis Hotel. While the 3 floors of hotel rooms remain largely unchanged from the 1950s, the building will require costly structural restoration and upgrades. To date, these costs have put the St. Francis beyond the reach of investors looking to return the St. Francis to the beautiful hotel it once was in the early 1900s. SB 565 would be a difference maker in these efforts.

If the St. Francis and other buildings are restored through the Revitalize Main Street Act, new businesses would emerge and existing businesses would improve due to increased activity in Downtown Albany.

I urge your support of the Revitalize Main Street Act on behalf of the people of Albany and other communities like Albany across the state. Thank you.

Rod Porsche

Executive Director

Albany Downtown Association

126 Ferry St. SW

Albany, OR 97321