

Comments Submitted on April 10, 2017 for Amended SB871 Hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

My name is John Sandie and I am a resident of northeast Portland.

I want to thank the sponsors of SB871, in particular, Sen Dembrow and Rep Keny-Guyer for their continuing support of this important issue concerning public health risks.

For the last three years, United Neighborhoods for Reform (UNR) has lobbied city and state agencies for effective oversight in requiring responsible demolition methods while removing a structure within an urban residential zone. The potential for exposure of hazardous materials is well defined in many recent studies conducted by government agencies, as well as academic institutions. SB871, as amended and earlier implemented SB705 are steps towards UNR's goal of protecting the public health during demolitions. However, without clear requirements on verifying that the spirit and intent of the legislation is being carried out on a routine basis; the ambiguous nature of diluted accountability will fill the void and real reduction in the health risks will be an illusion. Recent investigative articles on severe gaps in asbestos abatement during Portland housing demolitions highlights this all too well.

I am encouraged that SB871 has specifically addressed the lead based paint issue where SB705 was mute. As part of implementation of SB871, the legislature must demand OHA, in concert with municipal agencies, immediately require "best practices" as defined within the studies mentioned above, as well as, by EPA in their evolving applications of lead paint Renovation, Repair and Painting Rules (RRP) – recommending these be applied to housing demolitions. The increasing level of demolition activity requires urgent attention to this point.

In addition, there needs to be clear understanding of what constitutes a demolition of a structure. In this case the state definition must govern requirements and actions of local government bodies; liberal allowances under virtual demolitions classified as "major renovations" cannot be an excuse for not properly protecting the public.

Thank you for considering these comments as you review the language of SB871 with the goal of making it sound and effective legislation. Ultimately, effective abatement of hazardous materials coupled with full manual deconstruction is the only safe and responsibly method to remove a structure in dense urban environments; SB871 is critical transitional legislation until this becomes the norm.

Respectfully, John Sandie