

From: davemult@aol.com
To: [JWMNR Exhibits](#)
Cc: [Rep. KenyGuyer](#); [Sen. MichaelDembrow@state.or.us](#)
Subject: MY TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 2007
Date: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 11:20:51 AM

To: Ways & Means Committee (and Subcommittee on Natural Resources)
From: David S. Nichols, Ph.D.
5107 NE Couch Street
Portland, OR 97213-3021
Subject: Opposition to HB 2007
Date: June 21, 2017

I write to urge you to oppose HB 2007, a proposal that is intended to solve housing affordability problems but that is more likely to worsen than alleviate them. Among the flaws in HB 2007:

- It doesn't require that new housing units replacing demolished structures be affordable;
- It is likely to accelerate the loss of smaller, more affordable houses; and
- It will result in the degradation of Oregon's historic neighborhoods.

I do not live in a historic neighborhood, but my home is close to the very attractive and historic Laurelhurst area. I am amazed (and dismayed) by statements made by HB 2007 proponents that assume that people who live outside historic districts derive no benefit from them.

Having spent my career in clinical psychology, I have concluded that the quality of our built environment can improve – or degrade – our physical and mental health.

The health-related benefits of physical activity (e.g., walking) are well-documented. Historic neighborhoods typically have high Walk Scores. For this reason, even people who do not live in such neighborhoods benefit from them, as I do, in the sense that they offer visually pleasing environments and an enhanced sense of place in which to walk, to enjoy the sheer beauty of the varied architecture and streetscapes, thereby to reduce the stresses in their

daily lives.

The walkability of historic neighborhoods is not accidental. It's the result of the interesting, attractive, and well-designed homes located on pedestrian-friendly streets enhanced by significant tree canopies. (Numerous studies have been conducted on the health benefits of trees.)

HB 2007's removal of design review as a tool available to local governments is likely to encourage the kind of pedestrian-hostile construction that erodes the walkability of neighborhoods and thereby degrades an important way for people gain exercise and to reduce stress .

In closing, I urge your committee to avoid rushing to enact a seriously flawed proposal. Take the time to get things right. The long-term consequences of HB 2007 are likely to be unfortunate.

Sincerely,

David S. Nichols

P.S. Remember what Winston Churchill once said: "We shape our buildings; thereafter, they shape us." I'd add: We shape our built environment; thereafter, it shapes us.