

"Natural Resources Subcommittee of the Joint Ways & Means Committee."

June 21, 2017

Dear Committee Members

I am writing in support of HB 2007 which I find is crucial to maintaining the diversity of our housing stock. Some reasons for this opinion are as follows.

1. National Registry nominations are inherently undemocratic. Any person can nominate a National Registry Historic District without consent of their neighbors and the only process their neighbors may have to object is by getting notarized declarations during a compressed time period at the end of the process after thousands of dollars have been wasted on consulting fees.
2. By contrast, local districts require majority consent and are a fairer and more democratic form of historic preservation.
3. We have seen several times recently that the National Registry process has been abused by vocal minorities who suppress dissent and intentionally mislead their neighbors about the consequences of a National Registry designation. This happened in Buckman, (http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2013/05/buckman_historic_district_prop.html), Irvington (http://www.oregonlive.com/front-porch/index.ssf/2015/01/irvington_residents_gear_up_fo.html) and Eastmoreland (<http://www.pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/350588-229962-a-neighborhood-divided-eastmoreland-proceeds-with-historic-district-application->) and it is happening again in Laurelhurst with the Board of the Neighborhood Association working directly with an advocacy group and failing to provide unbiased information to neighbors.
4. A National Registry designation should not be an end-around from majority consent to the burdens of design review/demolition review since the designation itself doesn't require majority consent.
5. We should not make National Registry status an easy method to put design review and demolition review in place when the intent is clearly to prevent density and affordable housing and when these reviews will add to the costs consumers pay for housing.

Sincerely,

Dennis S. Griswold