

Subject: HB2007 A-Engrossed v6- Pork Laden UN-Affordable Housing Bill

Dear Legislative Leader,

HB 2007 A-Engrossed is a dangerous and cynical response to everyone's concern about the housing shortage/affordability crisis. After 6 amendments, HB 2007 *lacks even rudimentary analysis* of the costs, benefits, legality, or possible impacts. If enacted as law, the fundamentals of our state land use laws, comprehensive plans, local decision making are undermined. In contrast to its stated intent this bill will:

- **Double lot density entitlements in single family zones allowing the HBA statewide entitlements and purchasing leverage in the name of affordability**
- **Accelerate demolitions of affordably-priced single family housing**
- **Fuel renter displacement and decreased affordability**
- **Add wasteful demolition debris to landfills**
- **Drive economic and social displacement**
- **Drive higher land values and taxes in single family zones resulting in more not less costly housing.**
- **Strip away local control of zoning and regulation**
- **Fail to provide any measures to increase "affordable" housing.**

The undocumented costs to the state will be in the hundreds of thousands. The cost to local government will be in the tens of millions, including staff, public engagement, undermined credibility and legal costs.

As amended, HB 2007 stretched the focus from "affordable" to broadly inclusive "needed housing". The two interest groups behind HB 2007 have loaded it with provisions that compromise public good in exchange for increased profits. 1000 Friends of Oregon is waging a personal crusade to eliminate single family zoning, historic districts, and local design regulations in Portland that they claim, without facts, are based in racism and are driving housing costs.

In greater detail these are the key measures and contained in the bill:

- **HB 2007 Fails to address demolition of viable housing.**
 - Existing housing is our most affordable housing. We need to discourage wasteful demolitions.
 - Demolishing viable single family houses for duplexes causes displacement – most often of renters. (For example land cost including demolition of a house (in Portland metro) is conservatively in the range \$250,000. The replacement house will be sold for about \$650,000. Most likely a renter has been displaced.
 - If the developer purchased to demolish, a resident owner has been outbid by a cash offer and that family has been displaced from the neighborhood.
- **HB 2007 Outlaws single family zoning throughout the state in the name of affordability.** Single family housing is the overwhelmingly preferred pathway from

renting to home-ownership, stability, and wealth-building. Zoning is intended to designate appropriate use at a variety of densities and upzoning does not make housing more affordable.

- **HB 2007 Eviscerates protections for residential historic districts**
 - Historic Districts are vital to Oregon economic activity, sense of place, and sense of community history.
 - DLCD's carefully vetted revisions to Goal 5 - the land use policy intended to protect historic, scenic, and natural resources was just updated at substantial cost in staff and volunteer time. The process will be wasted.
 - Around 1 % of housing units in Portland or in Oregon are in historic districts.
 - Claims that HDs are "undemocratic" and obstruct the construction of needed housing are simply false. Residents actually have a veto vote- unlike HB2007.
- **HB 2007 Eviscerates discretionary design review everywhere** except in 2 locations in Portland –Central City and Gateway (on the grounds that it takes too long and interferes with needed housing!) This will require local governments at great expense to create new "clear and objective standards" or cease to consider design as a factor of character building or preservation in land use review.
- **HB 2007 Arbitrarily short-circuits the land use and plan review process for "needed housing"**. Statutory regulations already establish timelines for review and permitting. The bill fails to consider the project scope (backyard ADU, SOR tower, or single family house) or market driven conditions. Abbreviating the cycle may increase carelessness by hurried reviewers or the issuing of arbitrary comments to force an extension. When there is a sudden change in the permit workload, additional staff must be hired and trained (or laid off) and this measure will only exacerbate these costly cycles for local governments.
- **HB 2007 Deregulates** constraints on potentially inappropriate housing on land owned by "places of worship", and on land near airport runways. and reinforces language to placate the modular home industry
- **HB 2007 Requires** 60 years of "affordability" for projects accelerated through the land use review process. This is clearly unrealistic since there is no funding provided for enforcement.
- **HB 2007 ignores Planning Goals #1 and # 2 – Land Use Planning** – the goal language states that actions must be consistent with comprehensive plans of cities and counties. "Single-Family-Residential" is a comp plan designation in city and county plans throughout the state - - and it never included duplexes, tri-plexes, or four-plexes.

HB 2007 is a statewide land grab entitlement for developers. It will arbitrarily double density, fuel more demolitions of affordably-priced single family housing, add environmentally harmful landfill waste, drive economic and social displacement, higher land values, and more costly housing. Shameful!

Lets work together during the coming year to better understand the issues and propose sustainable solution.

Sincerely,
Rod Merrick, AIA, NCARB
Portland, Oregon