

From: Chris Chen
To: [JWMNR Exhibits](#)
Subject: Writing in Support of HB2007
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11 June 2017

Chris Chen
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Dear Members of the Natural Resources Subcommittee of the Joint Ways & Means Committee:

My name is Chris Chen. I live in the Eastmoreland neighborhood in Portland. I write to you in support of HB 2007.

A little more than a year ago, a small number of my neighbors, working through the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association, started the process to designate Eastmoreland as a National Historic District. Their goals, as they've stated, are not to preserve history, but to prevent demolitions by using historic resource protections to prevent infill development.*

It is without a doubt that this proposal is an attempt to affect land use policy in a manner that exploits loopholes in state law that are triggered with a national register designation. It is, in no uncertain terms, an attempt at exclusionary zoning by the use of the national register process.**

I am deeply opposed to the imposition of a Historic District on my neighborhood for these and many other reasons. I, and a core group, have been working to oppose this by reaching out to our neighbors and collecting notarized objections to stop the process. Federal law provides that complete applications for historic districts can only be stopped by a majority of property owners submitting notarized objections to affirm their opposition. Nowhere in this process have I been asked for my consent.*** In fact, a vote of the neighborhood conducted by mail concerning this very topic got nearly a 67% return, and 51% of the respondents said no.

While we have over 1,000 notarized objections, making up over 49% of the property owners, we may not reach the threshold. This "opt-out" process is totally undemocratic.

HB 2007, as written, disconnects most State land use regulations from the National Register, and ensures that land use remains a matter of public process at the State, regional, and city levels. This is a policy shift that needs to happen soon. There are movements in other affluent, majority white neighborhoods in Portland such as Laurelhurst and Mount Tabor, to name two, to use the National Register to shift development pressures to other, poorer neighborhoods.

I spend a fair amount of time in North Portland, where my girlfriend has a house on North Vancouver Avenue. The neighborhood has changed a great deal in the last few years. Lots of high-end housing has gone in, which has only accelerated gentrification. I understand how complicated this issue is. People are not going to stop moving here, and they need to live somewhere. I do believe this: we have a chance to be inclusive, to make this a better state, and to ensure that the pressures and the blessings of new neighbors are shared equally no matter

what our station in life.

Thank you for your consideration.

Chris Chen

* Read and hear the story at OPB's State of Wonder: <http://www.opb.org/radio/article/keep-eastmoreland-free-historic-controversy/>

** From the OPB story: “Our feeling is that the density should be where it belongs,” said Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association member Tim Moore. “You’re talking about lower income people or younger people who want to rent or need to rent and they need to be where there’s good transit. This is a little oasis because it’s down here, and it’s just not appropriate.”

*** The inclusion of my house in the proposed historic district was actually called out during a working meeting of the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, where a commissioner commented that it appeared that the inclusion of my house within district boundaries was an attempt to “capture the property”.