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Subject: HB 2007, Hearing on Thursday. Fix it with Restore Oregon Coalition Amendments or Vote NO please.
Date: Wednesday, June 21, 2017 7:07:13 PM

Dear Members of Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources committee:

We all want more affordable housing all over Oregon. I especially want it in my City of Portland.

However, I hope you agree that we should be increasing density without demolition and while conserving the historic character of our older neighborhoods. Please adopt the Restore Oregon Coalition's amendments to FIX HB 2007.

These amendments focus incentives on the creation of affordable housing, not market-rate housing.

It will stop tear downs of good modest-priced homes, unless they're being replaced with multiple affordable units.

The amendments will enable the internal conversion of existing houses into as many as four units without triggering the cost-prohibitive commercial building code. This adds density while retaining character.

Leave in place baseline protections for new historic districts, while providing incentives for ADUs, internal conversions, and compatible infill.

As it stands, HB 2007 is based on FALSE PREMISES:

1. One premise is that simply building more housing – even if it's at high market rates – will have the trickle-down effect of creating more affordability. We already know that in Portland that is not working!

And, there is NO EVIDENCE this has worked in other cities. One need only look at San Francisco and Vancouver, BC.

2. A second premise of the exiting bill is that we have a shortage of market rate housing in Portland and other major metro areas.

Market rate housing is doing fine – there's even an over-supply at the higher end.

We do not have enough AFFORDABLE housing. Building more high-end homes will not help that

3. The bill also assumes that there is insufficient buildable land inside the UGB. That is not true either.

Portland's central city is already dense, but outer neighborhoods have lots of opportunities for development and deserve investment.

4. Finally, the bill as it stands assumes that designation of historic districts is being used as a mechanism for blocking density and affordable housing.

Historic designation does NOT prohibit accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or infill development. Some historic districts require design review for compatibility. Recently revised Goal 5 rules provide that the only automatic protection for new historic districts is demolition review.

Historic districts make up just 1% - 3% of residential zoning in this state. They are not the problem and provide significant community benefits worthy of good stewardship.

There are positive aspects to HB 2007 such as streamlining review, establishing clear and objective standards for affordable housing design, and allowing religious institutions to create

affordable housing on their property.

But, to avoid doing more harm than good, we urge you to either adopt the proposed amendments as a package, or VOTE NO on this bill.

Respectfully,
Susan and Ted Schneider
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