

Date: June 21, 2017

Subject: HB 2007-A v6 engrossed

Dear Legislative Leaders,

I am writing as private citizen who has been working on issues of houselessness, housing affordability and gentrification almost since I moved to Portland nearly 18 years ago. Although I remain extremely concerned about our state's housing crisis — the lack of affordable housing, the demolition of sound, modest priced homes, and the ever increasing displacement of our more vulnerable residents, I cannot support HB 2007- A. The intentions behind this bill and the amount of work that has gone into improving it are admirable, but the bill creates untested statewide mandates, which are not directly tied to the desired outcome, i.e., the creation of more affordable housing throughout Oregon.

We lack affordable housing not market rate housing, and much of the building that has occurred in the past few years has exacerbated the problem, not fixed it. As a neighbor describes it, “We have seen the rash of demolitions in Portland where small, affordable houses full of character and history and “embodied energy” have been torn down to build ever larger SINGLE FAMILY housing that towers over its neighbors, runs up to maximum setbacks, reduces trees and green space and sells for 2, 3 and even 4 times what the demolished house sold for.”

Unfortunately HB 2007-A does not provide real incentives to encourage the development of more affordable units nor does it consider the costs of monitoring to ensure any affordable units that are built remain affordable for 60 years. The bill stresses clear and objective standards to provide certainty for builders and a streamlined review process, ostensibly to save time and money. This will be helpful to developers whether a project is market rate or designated as affordable.

This bill is not revenue neutral for local jurisdictions. Its requirements will need to be addressed via local code changes, which will require staff time and resources and of course public involvement. Although the bill requires the collection of data from a sample of jurisdictions, the evaluation approach does not seem to include adequate before and after comparisons to determine if the proposed changes are having the desired effect on the housing crisis.

Because I have been involved in various public involvement efforts here in Oregon since 1975 both as staff and as a volunteer I am concerned that the proposed requirements of HB 2007-A pre-empt land use decisions that should be handled at the local level. Planning Goal 1 sets up an expectation and a requirement that people will have a chance to be involved in crafting changes to the development codes that govern their jurisdictions. I am concerned that this bill will create resistance to the very kind of efforts that HB 2007-A is trying to encourage.

If you do pass HB 2007-A I would ask that you consider these amendments:

1. Provide staffing to assist in the development of model codes along with education to assist jurisdictions in recognizing barriers to affordability in their existing development review process, along with the impacts of demolition and displacement in their communities.

2. Focus incentives on the creation of **affordable** housing, not market-rate housing.
3. Stop tear downs of solid, modest-priced homes, unless they're being replaced with multiple **affordable** units that are compatible in mass and scale with their neighbors.
4. 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.
5. Leave in place baseline protections for new historic districts, while providing incentives for ADUs, internal conversions, and compatible infill.

Thank you for considering my concerns regarding this piece of legislation.

Sincerely,
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For the record I live (by accident, not by design) in Ladd's Addition, a historic district in the Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood, that is the poster child for "missing middle" housing. We already have many duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes (many of them the result of internal conversions), and courtyard housing. My neighbors have developed more ADU's in the recent past than the average number developed across Portland neighborhoods as a whole. Our neighborhood association has a history of working with REACH Community Development Corporation to develop and maintain affordable housing. We have long sought ways to keep our neighborhood and business districts affordable and we need your help in this endeavor.

As members of the Oregon Housing Alliance, **we favor development of low-income housing and programs that assist households in need of a safe place to live.** We also, however, have a long history as advocates for Oregon's statewide land use planning system **with local implementation** and that is the basis of our opposition to this bill.

HB 2007 A usurps local control. Reducing the deadline to approve building permits from 120 days to 100 days, even for a specific type of development, is an inappropriate fiscal imposition on local

governments. Remember that this bill is meant to set these requirements on cities and counties large and small. Requirements to change local development codes without a local public process may well create a backlash from citizens who expect that development code changes occur after local public hearings. We especially object to the "Emergency Clause" contained in this bill as it would not even give local jurisdictions an opportunity to warn their citizens of these proscribed changes.

The League supports accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and more expanded housing and advocated for using the "Table 5" List created as a part of the simplified UGB process...and got it added to HB 4079 (50-acre pilots). **But that Table provided cities with choices.**

Rather than forcing these policies on local jurisdictions, the League would prefer to see a shared staff position between Oregon Housing and Community Services and the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) who would assist local governments with their housing issues rather than the DLCD information gathering required by this bill. Much of this information has already been collected as a result of the rulemaking in HB 4079. (See **League testimony on HB 3373 in support of the staff funding request.**)