



# CITY OF West Linn

June 22, 2017

Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Brad Witt, Co-Chairs  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2007

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and Witt and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the West Linn City Council to express the City's **opposition to HB 2007**, which imposes inappropriate state control over local decision-making in development decisions and creates new, unclear procedures for local governments, citizens and developers to wade their way through. Instead of producing affordable housing, this bill is likely to result in more complications and more legal challenges.

West Linn's specific concerns include:

- The proposed process for processing applications for new housing in historic districts (Section 10 of the A-6 amendments) is complicated and unclear. It appears to significantly cut back on historic district protections, which exist for a wide variety of good reasons. Creating a separate set of standards for these areas will only lead to more confusion and delay in the development timeline. We challenge anyone to clearly explain the process proposed by the A-6 amendments to a homeowner or developer at a Planning Department permit counter.
- The proposed rules encourage teardowns of existing houses which are often more affordable than the housing that replaces them, even when those are duplexes or triplexes. When this challenge is combined with disruptions to neighborhood character, it becomes clear this is an area that the state should leave to local governments.
- Requiring every city to allow duplexes in single family zones will not lead directly to more affordable housing. The City of West Linn, and every other city in the state, already plans for a full range of housing under Statewide Planning Goal 10. The specifics of implementation, including determining allowable uses in each zoning district, should be left to local communities.

Housing affordability is a significant concern in our region. West Linn supports the elimination of state requirements that complicate the delivery of affordable housing, and supports new and strengthened financial tools, which we believe are what would really deliver new housing. Unfortunately HB 2007 as drafted pre-empts city local planning authority, cuts back on citizen involvement and is likely to lead to more contentious development review processes. For these reasons we oppose the bill in its current form. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Axelrod  
Mayor, City of West Linn