

**February 7, 2017**

**TO: House Committee On Economic Development and Trade**

Chair, Representative Ann Lininger  
Vice-Chair, Representative Pam Marsh  
Vice-Chair, Representative David Brock Smith

**CC: Members of the House Committee On Economic Development and Trade**

Representative Brian Clem  
Representative David Gomberg  
Representative Ken Helm  
Representative Andy Olson  
Representative Bill Post  
Representative E. Werner Reschke

**FROM:** Troy Ainsworth, AIA  
FFA Architecture and Interiors, Inc.

**RE: HB 2153 Letter of Support**

Dear Representatives Ann Lininger, Pam Marsh, and David Brock Smith,

Interior designers are an integral part of many full-service architecture firms in Oregon and across the country. In the case of FFA Architecture and Interiors, Inc., our firm is a multi-disciplinary one that features architecture, planning, historic preservation, and interior design services.

Interior designers in this professional setting focus their efforts on the planning and design of all types of interior environments. Some of the projects are "tenant improvements", which create new spaces and working environments in existing buildings, while for other projects the interior designer is part of the overall design team for the project.

Other areas of building design practice that interior designers specialize in include the layout, design, and specifications for custom designed and manufacturer's standard furnishing systems. In addition, interior designers investigate and determine finishes, colors, and materials for the interior environments we are creating.

The areas of design that architects focus on deal with the overall planning and design of buildings - their site and floor plans, the exterior appearance and materials, the structural and mechanical / electrical / plumbing systems, and the basic interior planning.

Traditionally, the architect has the primary responsibility for the building design, meeting the basic requirements of all of the applicable building and zoning codes for the project. The architect's duty to the public is to assure that the health, safety, and welfare of the public is met through the design of each project.

This varies significantly from project to project for our firm. On buildings where the interior designer is the lead, or the interior component of the work is a large percentage of the work, we make sure that the interior designer responsible for that project assists during the construction phase. We assure that they have input regarding

contractor questions, contractor submittals, and that they visit the site to review as-installed conditions. On projects where we have developed the furnishings and equipment package, the interior designer responsible for that scope performs a final review and punch list of the work.

Legislation for interior designers will be a great benefit for our practice, because projects that the interior designer is the lead on will be handled completely by that designer. Currently, a licensed architect is involved to review and take responsibility for the work by stamping and signing the drawings that are submitted for a building permit. Many of these projects are all interior work that does not involve structural or other types of engineering.

Our interior designers are very experienced at planning and design for interior spaces that meet or exceed the requirements of the building code. We feel that if the client/project relies on our interior designers for their professional knowledge and that those interior designers are utilizing the same standards of practice and referencing the same requirements that the architects are, that they should be recognized through legislation for their professional services. Many professional service firms have become more and more diverse in the last ten years, and ours reflects this trend, by offering a range of design services to our clients. Having our interior designers registered will only improve their and our standing in the design community.

We feel that registered interior designers in our firm working in concert with the other licensed professionals will only strengthen our ability to compete in the market place. For the types of work that we do, the clients we work with, and the projects we execute, lowest cost for services is rarely the primary selling point. Our clients, and many clients that firms similar to ours serve, rely on us for our design capabilities, our expertise, and our high level of professional care we bring to each project. Our clients' bottom line is always served if we do a great job for them, and do it right the first time. Recognizing these qualities in our interior designers will only help us market our services to our current and new clients.

I think that legislation for interior designers would improve the consistency of service and provide for much-needed regulation of designers in general. Currently, my understanding is that there is no system in place to regulate the interior design industry in Oregon, resulting in a wide range of practices, procedures, and costs that clients confront. Other professionals in the construction industry are recognized and regulated through licensing, including architects, engineers, and contractors. I think it is time for interior designers to be registered professionals, too.