To: Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair Rep. and Ron Noble, Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing

From: Anne Nesse, Director of http://

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I am testifying on behalf of my group in favor of passage of HB 2001. It is so obvious that we need an increased supply of smaller square footage housing in all the urban areas throughout our State. We are in a state of emergency. And limited supplies of housing help to create unrealistically high prices for rentals and small apartment ownership.

My group is suggesting one inclusion in this Bill. A designated group of builders to help draw up some guidelines for building these units (that keeps them affordable), but assures the best building practices, so that safety, lessened sound transmission between units, and other superior building recommendations (even sustainably designed landscaping) will occur.

My example comes from someone who builds the exact type of units described in this Bill in the Portland area. And by having these set of recommendations within the Bill it assures that all the counties and cities that will be involved in this construction will have the best interests of the consumers involved (renters or owners?).

Fire:

Allow Type 13D fire sprinklers to meet fire sprinkler requirement for all structures within residential zones including four or fewer dwelling units. Specifically, allow these fire sprinkler systems to be flushed by draining the far end of each circuit to a toilet, so that it can be flushed a little bit at a time with each flush. Also, eliminate the requirement for a commercial-grade fire alarm system, as would be required in a high-rise. Focus on life safety, which a Type 13D system will protect.

Elevator:

Allow residential-grade elevators to be used for all structures including four or fewer dwelling units; specifically, do not require commercial elevators in this context. Commercial elevators can easily be \$100,000 to install, plus thousands more each year for ongoing inspection regimes. Residential elevators, despite also being safe enough to move small numbers of people routinely, are closer to \$27 to \$40,000, with much-reduced annual inspection costs. I think that allowing them on structures including fourplexes or with less than four units will allow more

developers and building owners to add elevators to provide adaptability and accessibility for our aging population. Security of access will allow more people to age in place and age in community without worrying that they're always going to be living just one injury away from being able to carry the groceries up the stairs to their home.

Greywater:

Allow for all structures within residential zones including four or fewer dwelling units to install greywater systems under the state's Tier 1 residential SFR/duplex program, which having to meet the stricter and more onerous requirements of the multifamily-focused Tier 2 system. This will allow people to grow sustainable oases in their yards, food forests that will remain lush and green throughout the year, providing food for humans and animals while reducing the urban heat island effect.

Area of openings allowed on walls within a certain distance of other buildings:

This section of the building code is written as if having more than 15% of a building's wall area within 5 feet of a property line has scientifically been proven to kill babies. It's just not the case. I would recommend that, for buildings where a fire sprinkler system of any sort is provided, including of type 13D or 13R, that unlimited openings be allowed on walls within any distance of neighboring properties. A fallback solution would be to require dry stand-head sprinkler heads to cover exterior walls within the fire separation distance that contained more than the threshold number of openings. The issue is that old homes often violate this rule freely, because, you know, humans like having windows because they let in natural light. Forcing people to board up windows because the modern fire code likes to have soccer fields between buildings for fire separation reasons, even when those buildings are protected by fire sprinklers, is obviously needless overkill. There are multiple potential solutions that would be better than the current code.

The following suggestions are simply worth considering discussing with regards to the building codes concerning existing structures being converted from single family to four or less total dwelling units:

Sound Transmission Code:

While certainly nobody wants to hear every noise their upstairs, downstairs, or next door neighbor makes, how much is it worth making people pay for this? It can be very expensive to install a brand new floor above the existing floor in an existing house; this could easily add \$20 per square foot to the rehabilitation cost for such a project. While relationships between construction cost increase and rent

are not easily stated in a cut-and-dry manner, this could easily add \$200 to the monthly rent of a unit, or more. For rehab projects, is this something that needs to be legislated via the building code (Portland's STC/IIC Sound Transmission Code mandates)? Or, should waivers be granted for rehab projects regarding the sound transmission code, in order to allow all of those beautiful hardwood floors in old homes to be preserved rather than destroyed in the aim of less sound transmission? This is a question, not a recommendation: I simply raise the point because I see it as an area where construction costs on rehabs could be reduced without reducing life safety or health issues. In the old days, you met your neighbor when they were being loud, and they learned to take off their shoes and put down area rugs, and keep the music very low when playing it at odd hours.

Insulation Code:

Modern commercial building codes require R-19, I believe, which generally requires 6" thick walls. Older homes are typically constructed with 2x4" walls. While it's important to have an efficient home to save energy, this may not be worth the expense of removing all the drywall on all the interiors of exterior-facing walls in the home, furring out those walls, it's not the expense of the insulation, it's all that plus then having to put up new drywalls, finish it, paint it, and then install new trim over it and of course paint that too. This could easily add \$20 to 40 per square foot to the cost of a project, again, another \$200 to \$400 per month in rent. Is it worth it? Wouldn't caulking obvious gaps, using blow-in insulation if the walls are completely un-insulated, and installing Indows or new double- or triple-paned windows, as well as upgrading to new efficient Mini Split heating and cooling systems, go far enough towards adding energy efficiency to a home conversion project involving an existing house? This is a question for the experts.

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Economic sustainability requires housing near jobs, near easy mass transit, housing near renewable power grids, and the utilization of decreased energy usage that occurs when families live in smaller square footage homes. HB 2001 is the start of encouraging the building of such units in many urban areas throughout our state where the needs are greatest.

Anne Nesse, Thank you for your service and consideration of this information.