

To: Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing
From: Constance Beaumont (resident of Portland, Oregon)
Date: February 13, 2019
Subject: Opposition to House Bill 2001

I write to express my opposition to House Bill 2001 because I believe this measure will worsen, rather than alleviate – Oregon’s housing affordability problems. Among my reasons for opposing HB 2001:

- Trigger for demolition and land speculation: HB 2001 is likely to encourage still more demolition of our smaller, more affordable houses and to stimulate land speculation by developers.
- No guarantee of housing affordability: HB 2001 fails to require that new units resulting from the proposed up-zoning of single-family residential areas will be affordable.
- Unnecessary disruption of older neighborhoods: HB 2001 does little to ensure that the new development would be either well-designed or compatible with older neighborhoods. Instead, it seems likely to intensify the construction of the kinds of auto-centric structures that have been sprouting up all over and degrading the pedestrian-friendliness of cities.

That said, there *is* a critical need to augment Oregon’s supply of affordable housing. This should not require the destruction of other community assets, however.

Rather than enact what appears to be a Developer’s Dream, I would encourage the legislature to look into some approaches taken by other jurisdictions around the country – approaches that avoid pitting affordable housing against other community assets (including the historic resources that [Oregon’s Goal 5](#) calls for protecting). For example:

- The [Vermont Housing and Conservation Fund](#), which makes loans and grants to municipalities, nonprofits, and housing co-ops to develop, preserve, and rehabilitate *perpetually* affordable housing;
- The [Community Preservation Act of Massachusetts](#), which reflects a collaborative approach to housing challenges on the part of affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space conservation advocates seeking to expand local affordable housing supplies; and
- Community Land Trusts.

The Legislature might also consider testing the concepts and assumptions of whatever legislation emerges from the current process (or of an entirely different bill with similar goals) through a pilot project.

HB 2001 is well-intentioned and seeks to address a critical issue. Urban renewal, too, was well-intentioned, and yet it caused widespread, lasting damage to communities across the country. Good intentions are not enough.