

Watts Remy

From: Matthew Davis <M.Davis@ARG-PNW.com>
Sent: Monday, March 25, 2019 9:24 AM
To: SENR Exhibits
Subject: I support SB 927

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee members,

I SUPPORT Senate Bill 927 and urge you to vote “Yes” on it. Protection of Oregon’s historic places is important and required by Statewide Planning Goal 5. Historic buildings and districts are vital for commerce, tourism, and quality of life.

The existing law doesn’t work:

The Legislature enacted ORS 197.772 in 1995. This so-called “owner consent” law prevents a local government from designating a historic property or district without the unanimous (100%) consent of each and every individual owner. *Even one property owner can prevent the designation of an entire district.* This law has blocked the designation of any new Oregon local historic districts for over twenty years, undermining Goal 5. No other state has such an owner consent law. No other government land use designation can be vetoed by any single person. No other community process is so anti-democratic.

Since ORS 197.772 blocked new Oregon historic districts, the only way Oregonians can protect their historic areas has been via federal designation on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register program is important, but not sufficient. It is very difficult to get listed in the National Register. The process is long and arduous and the federal criteria are very strict. Local governments have little input. The National Register program works for some of Oregon’s historic resources and brings needed federal funding to the State Historic Preservation Office, but it is not enough for Oregon. Oregon needs flexible, state-enabled, locally-designed programs for local Historic Districts.

Senate Bill 927

Section 1 of SB 927 will repeal ORS 197.772, replacing “owner consent” with a public process that, unlike the current process, comports with Oregon’s established land use review practices including public notice, public hearing, and an appealable decision by a politically accountable decision-maker. In so doing, the bill preserves all existing protections for existing National Register Historic Districts. Sections 3 and 5 of the bill will enable local programs.

I believe that SB 927 is essential because historic preservation works best when it is a locally driven process that protects those resources that matter to a community. I ask you to vote “YES” on Senate Bill 927.

Matt

Matthew Davis, AICP
Principal

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES GROUP

720 SW Washington Street, Suite 300 | Portland, OR 97205
971.256.5320 direct | m.davis@arg-pnw.com
San Francisco | Los Angeles | Portland
www.arg-pnw.com | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)