

Submitter: John Goodenberger
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

Dear Rep. Fahey:

Please accept my testimony in opposition to HB 3414.

A couple of months ago, I spoke with a woman who was desperately trying to find shelter. I explained that I was doing my best to renovate a building for transitional housing, but that funding was slow, and it would be another two years before the project is completed. Though appreciative, she asked, "What am I supposed to do in the meantime?"

So, I'm grateful for Gov. Kotek's sense of urgency to provide housing – for a variety of incomes – but I question whether the effort should be focused on new construction.

We have plenty of underutilized structures, whether they be commercial or residential, which could be used for additional housing. In Astoria, like many communities throughout Oregon, we recently revamped our zoning to allow more housing density. Consequently, I have two requests from the governor: 1) give us a chance to implement the zoning which city staff and the public worked hard to create; 2) provide more financial incentives to renovate our structures.

Last, I don't support the bill's effort to remove public testimony regarding new construction. Within the last year, we have had two in-fill housing projects proposed in Astoria. One was for work-force housing, the other was for low-income housing for the elderly. Both projects faced vociferous objections from townspeople; one project was cancelled; the other was approved and is working its way through permitting.

While I was discouraged by the opposition, I strongly believe a community should have the right to express their opinions. We live in a highly politicized climate; removing public input only creates distrust in the government. That distrust – particularly in a small town -- extends into the community. Therefore, House Bill 3414, as currently written, is anti-community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Goodenberger

Astoria, Oregon