

March 24, 2023

Re: Opposition to House Bill 3414

Dear Honorable Chair Dexter and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 3414. I vehemently oppose it. Please allow me to give you a few reasons why.

The provisions of HB 3414, including the -1 Amendment, serve to nullify local Comprehensive Plan Goals and accompanying development standards that were developed by a lengthy process of gathering valuable input from community members, and are implemented by volunteer Planning Commissioners and the elected City Council. Are these efforts to become irrelevant? Shelved? A relic?

As *one area planner recently said to me*, even before this bill was proposed, **“Sometimes we feel like just handing the Comprehensive Plan to the State and saying, “Why don’t you just make it the way you want it since we can’t even what’s in it anymore use it anymore?”**” The tone with which that comment was delivered was heartbreaking - the resignation and hopelessness....this from people who work tirelessly and without complaint to fit State mandates to local communities.

Is this how the incredibly brilliant and forward-thinking Land Use Planning Process in Oregon is designed to work? No. To remove almost all autonomy over local land use decisions for communities by the people who know the community best - the Planners, the Commissioners and the City Council, is the very definition of overreach, and the potential negative consequences cannot be overstated. Housing is important. It is not more important than everything else put together. This bill makes it seem that it is.

The assault on some of the Statewide Planning Goals is, frankly, shocking to me. Speaking only for myself, but also as someone who works with a dedicated group of Planners and volunteer Commissioners, the sense that we no longer have any ability to creatively problem solve for fear of litigation is crippling. This bill will only exacerbate that problem. The effect on morale, which is already poor, as evidenced by the mass exodus from Planning Departments all over the State, is likely to get worse by such a measure. The stifling effect on Goal 1, of all goals, is completely unacceptable. To limit the public’s already limited ability to challenge decisions flies in the face of the intent of Goal 1, and all the previous input that has been given. Was it in vain? In the words of another planner, in response to my question, said **“From the perspective of providing opportunities to comment on housing, the Oregon legislature killed Goal 1 long ago.”**

Finally, and specifically, if this bill is to be passed, aside from all of the problems outlined above, I ask that you add the two words, “Natural Features” to the section below, Line 14, so as to not completely ignore Goal 5 in the process of providing housing.

“(E) Implementation of land use regulations required to comply with a protective measure adopted pursuant to statewide planning goal relating to **natural features**, natural disasters and hazards;

Thank you for your time and attention, and your service to our State.

Most sincerely,

Carolyn Mayers