

Submitter: Michael Van Kleeck
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

Oregon is the most beautiful state in the union. The reason Oregon has been able to maintain the livability of our state is because we have had strong planning laws in place that have curbed the excess notions of developers. This bill threatens to undermine everything that makes Oregon special, by giving developers free rein to demand communities accept whatever development is desired. This is a horrible overstep by the Governor and the Legislature, and we must not allow Oregon to become another California through unregulated development.

The "housing shortage" is a media and developer-generated scare designed to undermine Oregon's standard-setting Land Use laws. One need only look at all the hollow buildings in downtown Portland and elsewhere- owned by banks that are sitting on real estate- to see that it is not new housing that is needed. It is imagination and reclamation, within the parameters of Oregon's Land Use laws.

As currently proposed, HB 3414 would allow developers to bypass city codes and processes in place to protect our built and natural resources, including regulations governing the alteration of landmark properties and new construction in designated districts, without demanding any increased density or level of affordability. Although the current version of the bill includes a list of exceptions that allow regulations relating to density, height, and floor-to-area ratio to remain, all other protections in place to avoid incompatible new development will no longer apply, if a developer asks for a variance under HB 3414. This would eliminate design compatibility protections such as massing, orientation, materials, windows, character-defining features, and stylistic detailing, as well as setbacks and tree preservation obligations for new residential development in every zone where residential uses are allowed. HB 3414 authorized variances will occur with no public notice and other than for the developer, there is no right to appeal.

While the stated intent is to spur more housing production, it's conceivable the results would do exactly the opposite. Whatever cost savings a developer may realize as a result of eliminating windows, trees, and setbacks do not need to be passed on to any future residents. There are many ways that we can support streamlining and incentivizing housing in a preservation- and climate-friendly manner while not sacrificing our existing resources – both built and natural. We are committed to this effort but not at this high and extreme cost.

Isn't it awfully interesting that both Dems and Republicans are united in undermining our Land Use laws? When something is being railroaded through Salem like this, you

know the people of Oregon are the ones who are being penalized. Land Use laws make Oregon the greatest state in the Union. Please stop this bill before we undo all the great work that has made our state a jewel and a model of good planning.