

Submitter: MS Jones
On Behalf Of: People and Planet
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

The quality and character of our built environments are as essential to the health of our planet and the people who live in and among them as is the preservation and restoration of our natural environments.

I understand that a lot of campaign money is riding on Governor Kotek's and Democratic and Republican legislators alike in passing this developer-friendly measure. However, I beg you to search for and find your humanity and conscience in rejecting this bill, even if it means big money being spent to get you voted out of office.

The homelessness and low-income housing crisis will never be solved by stripping communities of their rights to shape the quality, character and environmental and social impacts of their built environments. What we are primarily facing in Oregon, as in the rest of the country, is what Bernie Sanders keeps reminding us about, that we have an income disparity crisis, which has ended up becoming reflected as a housing crisis.

Our debt and growth-based economy continues to favor the very wealthy and siphon money away from the poor and middle class, causing the rich to continue to get richer and the rest of us to continue getting poorer. Again, no matter how much public money and public policy is thrown to developers and out of state investors, this crisis that sits at the root of the inability for the homeless and low income people to acquire afford housing will never be solved.

Rather than to continuing to subsidize the building of more and cheaper but more expensive housing for upper and middle income people, and weaken local control over the quality and character of these buildings in order to do so, public money and resources need to be spent on converting existing buildings into housing, and to just give these low income and homeless people these housings, as other countries have done to successfully end their homelessness and housing crisis, in tandem with all the social and medical services they need to get on their feet. We also need to simultaneously address the grossly inequitable economic system that will only continue to worsen the housing crisis.

Continuing to build new housing in a mostly unregulated market, while ignoring the growing income inequality in Oregon, which this bill is designed to spur along, will only benefit builders, investors, and banks, not the homeless, the poor, or the rest of us.

Please set your sights past your next election cycle and do the right thing and reject this misguided bill put forth by Governor Kotek.