

Submitter: Tony Greiner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

I have a couple of big concerns about SB 1537 as it is currently written. First, the bill has no protection for historic resources- buildings and neighborhoods. These compromise less than 2% of Portland's housing, and I suspect less of Oregon's. The historic neighborhood/building designation is difficult to obtain, taking several years to obtain, and then a majority vote by the property owners in the neighborhood. To toss this aside is not only wasteful, but it is a slap in the face of public participation. A simple fix would be to include Historic buildings and neighborhoods in the exempt section, which already contains exceptions for wetlands and a few other categories.

The other is that while the word "demolition" does not appear in the bill, the new Housing Accountability and Production Office has broad and undefined powers. There doesn't seem to be any thing that prohibits the HAPO from granting a variance to demolish an existing, moderately affordable home and replacing it with two mega-priced market rate units. That would lead to needless demolitions, and actually reduce the amount of affordable housing available.

Simply stating that demolitions are not part of the HAPO powers would prevent headaches down the road.

The bill should be voted down if it doesn't contain amendments to this affect.