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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

Oregon has over 138 National Register Historic Districts and thousands of designated homes across our state. So this section of the bill, if retained, would greatly impact these historic places, potentially leading to unrestricted demolition. This new rule would eliminate the minimal protection of a process that is designed to review and balance the needs of local communities and their historic homes and places.

Demolition review does NOT equal automatic demolition denial. It is a weighing of the public benefit of retention vs replacement.

- Demolition review is the only protection we offer in Oregon - to remove it will nullify Oregon's Land Use Goal 5 for historic resources.

I am a planner, urban designer and urbanist, and I oppose removal of demolition review for historic buildings in Oregon. It is a false dichotomy that pits preserving our non-renewable resource of historic buildings against providing the housing supply needed for our growing population.

Focusing on Transit Oriented Development is the best, proven way to meet our housing needs without increasing emissions from transportation or creating congestion.

The demolition review process balances the public benefit and often has helped create more housing, not hindering it.

As written, Section 22(1)(f) has no requirement that middle housing or affordable housing replace the demolished historic structure. It has NO connection to the bill's goal.

Historic designation requires rigorous research and vetting to prove cultural significance. They should not be erased without careful consideration.

No protection + no restoration & reuse incentives = Oregon ranks last in the U.S. for stewardship of its heritage places

We CAN increase housing in heritage areas. Utilizing a research grant from the Architecture Foundation of Oregon, I tested a strategy to get my neighbors in the historic district where I live to find room for 600 new homes while avoiding demolition of key buildings. It was a success, and there are many other such tools, including transfer of development rights, conservation zones, etc. It's not rocket science to craft a "both-and" strategy that would add more units within designated historic areas!

We can, and must do better!

Jonathan Konkol, AICP