

February 28, 2025

Re: Opposition to HB2138

Dear Chair Pam March, Vice-Chairs Tom Andersen and Vikki Breese-Iverson, and Committee Members,

Thank you for addressing housing and homelessness within Oregon. This is an important issue to me, and I appreciate your efforts. However, Section 22(1)(f), which eliminates public review for demolition, is at odds with my experience of working for decades toward the preservation of buildings and providing housing for Astorians.

Clearing sites through demolition produces empty lots, not housing. In Astoria, non-designated historic buildings have been demolished for speculation. But, when a developer proposed to demolish a long-vacant, historically designated hotel in downtown Astoria, the community voiced opposition... repeating the phrase, "no more empty lots." The city sided with the public and denied the demolition; the denial prompted the sale of the building to Innovative Housing, Inc. Now, Astoria has 40 units of low-income, workforce housing.

Astoria's downtown has another empty hotel building, which if not for its historic designation, would have been demolished long ago. Instead, we are close to launching its restoration and repurposing it for additional housing.

Please remove Section 22(1)(f) from this bill. It is anti-housing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Goodenberger
Astoria, historic preservation consultant
Restore Oregon board member