

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

My name is Anders Hart, and I live near Irving Park in Portland. I join Portland: Neighbors Welcome in supporting House Bill 2138, which will help address Oregon's housing shortage by legalizing more housing across the state with land already available in our cities and towns. It will also cut red tape that prevents working families from choosing homes that allow them to live affordably in their own communities. This bill will help people live near jobs that invest in their community, create opportunities for more aspiring homeowners, and allow more people to stay in their communities as they age.

I also specifically urge the committee to retain the language in Section 22, which repeals the requirement for demolition review for houses which are listed as "contributing" in National Register Historic Districts. Undemocratic National Register of Historic Places districts are distinct from local historic districts that have democratic oversight from the city council, which is allowed to consider factors other than historic preservation, such as housing production needs.

I was able to become a homeowner in Portland thanks to state and local land-use reforms that allowed for the construction of middle housing in lower-density residential districts. However, large swathes of Portland and other cities remain essentially off-limits to this type of housing due to demolition review requirements in National Register districts. These districts are often found in high-opportunity areas that afford easy access to jobs, transit, and amenities—the exact areas where we should focus our home-building efforts. The presence of a few historic buildings should not prevent the creation of desperately needed homes.

This bill retains Oregon cities' ability to preserve historical resources and does not impact local historic districts but does grant cities the flexibility they need to address our ongoing housing crisis and ensure that we can build housing for Oregonians of all ages, wages, and stages of life.

Thank you.