

Submitter: Terry Brandt
On Behalf Of: Portland Neighbors Welcome
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

Letter to the Board of Directors of the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association in opposition of HB 2138/7/2025

Dear Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association Board Members,

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association's (ENA) potential decision to fund a campaign opposing House Bill 2138. As our community, along with our state and nation, grapples with a significant housing crisis, it is crucial that we focus on solutions that allow for increased "middle housing" availability through sensible zoning reforms.

The ENA is dedicated to enhancing and preserving the quality and livability of the Eastmoreland neighborhood, facilitating coordination with neighboring communities and the City of Portland through communication, civic engagement, and volunteer efforts.

As indicated in the ENA's 2023 990-EZ Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, the ENA reported net assets of \$100,560 at the end of the year. It is essential that these funds that have been solicited from neighborhood donors are used in alignment with the ENA's core mission. ENA funds have not been raised to engage in lobbying against statewide legislation. This diverges from its mission and could jeopardize its nonprofit status.

According to IRS guidelines, organizations that qualify for Section 501(c)(3) status may not spend a substantial part of their activities on lobbying efforts. While some lobbying is permissible, excessive activity can lead to the loss of tax-exempt status.

An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.

We understand that House Bill 2138, section 32/33 (f), proposes to repeal the requirement for demolition review for houses listed on the National Register of Historic Places, essentially allowing owners of such houses to demolish them without additional bureaucratic hurdles. We believe this could provide homeowners the flexibility to remodel their homes to accommodate larger families, particularly in historic districts like Eastmoreland.

Although we may have differing views on the historic neighborhood designation, it is vital that we move forward without allowing these differing opinions to once again escalate into political contention within the neighborhood. If any Board members or residents feel strongly about opposing this bill, we urge them to pursue their positions as private citizens rather than representation by the ENA. It is also essential to consider that this lobbying effort may once again alienate residents who opposed the historic district designation and those who chose not to vote on the matter.

Let us continue to strive for unity within our community rather than division. Thank you to all Board members and volunteers who are committed to fulfilling the ENA's stated purpose.

Sincerely,

Terry and Patty Brandt

6819 SE 29th Ave.

Portland, OR 97202