Submitter: Jordan Lewis

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

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

My name is Jordan Lewis and I live in the Goose Hollow neighborhood of Portland. I'm testifying today with Portland: Neighbors Welcome in support of House Bill 2138, because I know that it is our responsibility as Oregonians to restore the vibrancy our cities enjoyed before decades of sprawl and white flight gutted them. Cities like Portland saw mass downzoning, urban renewal and sprawl in the mid century in the name of racist segregation, and undoing that harm will require an ongoing effort. HB 2138 is just one step in that larger process; through smart reforms like it we can legalize housing choice, and through that choice, allow Oregonians to live affordably near their jobs and recreation. I want to see vacant lots returned to human occupation and I want to see Portland's neighborhoods restored to the vibrancy that we now only make murals of.

In addition, I ask for the inclusion of the language in Section 22. (1), which repeals the requirement for demolition review for houses which are listed as "contributing" in National Register Historic Districts. National Register Historic Districts are an undemocratic, financially-motivated mechanism through which landowners can veto the development of any plot of land in a neighborhood, whether the plot in question is itself historically significant or merely "contributing" to a historic district. If a district is truly historic, it can always be codified as so by the city council in question, without empowering incumbent landowners to stall and undermine change. Cities are the economic engines which power our state and country; the only reason we love cities as they are is because change has happened, for decades and years before! To stall all possible change runs counter to the very nature of cities, and empowers a few at the expense of many.