

Submitter: Bruce and Diane Branson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
HB2138

My husband and I are writing in opposition of HB2138. While we agree that housing, especially affordable housing is needed we have concerns about the impact of future high density housing developments on existing homes and families.

We live in North Albany, we are in Benton County and within the city limits of Albany. North Albany is made up of small neighborhoods accessed by residential streets. The older neighborhoods have narrow streets with limited to no street parking and no sidewalks. Access to and from North Albany, Corvallis and other communities to Albany is on Highway 20 and across a 2 lane bridge.

North Albany has seen tremendous growth in the last years. Many acres of both farmland and natural areas have been sold and developed for housing. These developments have, of course, brought many more individuals and families to the area. Since HB 2001 (2019) was passed lots previous zoned for single family homes are now being developed with up to four times that. Recently a development that was originally planned for 22 units is now being developed with 80 units. The impact on the infrastructure and schools will be tremendous.

The passage of this bill will significantly impact the safety and livability of this area and others like it. Without planning and subsequent development of street improvements including sidewalks, improved access to law enforcement and public safety (fire, medical) the safest of the community is at risk.

One example is this. It's 4 pm on a weekday, school children (grade school and middle school age) are getting out of school, the high schoolers are also getting out of school and heading home but they're coming from Albany into North Albany (the high schools are not in North Albany), adults are getting off work and everyone is commuting from all directions. Remember access to and from North Albany is over two, one way bridges. Traffic is backed up, it's stop and go, drivers are getting frustrated by the very slow commute, children are trying to cross streets, add bicyclists to the mix and now there is an accident or other emergency. Law enforcement, fire trucks and ambulances can't get through the gridlock. I think you can get the picture.

We know that housing is needed for our increasing population but with this we need

to make sure that livability is addressed too. Street improvements, parks, sidewalks, emergency services and schools must be addressed. With increased housing and density planning and development of infrastructure must also occur! Safety of the public is at risk.

Please consider the impact of this bill on existing communities. We ask the following:

1. Make clear that middle housing is intended for infill into lots that existed at the time that HB 2001 was signed into law (or at the latest June 30, 2021), rather than allowing middle housing developments on wide-open green fields.

2. Allow cities to deny middle housing petitions based on inadequate infrastructure, such as roads.

3. Include the provisions of HB 3847 with regard to providing funding for infrastructure related to middle housing

4. Expand the radius for giving notice to neighboring property per SB 737

Bruce & Diane Branson