

Submitter: Julia Fox

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

There is just one sentence in this bill that I take issue with: Section 22(1)(f) currently requires (f) "Repealing requirements for demolition review for houses listed in the National Register of Historic Places." I think this proposal is a direct affront to Goal 5 of Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals. I do not believe that protecting historic buildings and creating middle housing are at odds with each other. There are many cases of historic buildings being repurposed to provide low-income housing in Oregon. Take the Merwyn Building in Astoria, for example. I believe targeting buildings on the National Register is a scapegoat for the larger issue of decades of discriminatory residential zoning laws that are finally catching up with us, and repealing demolition review requirements is not a quick fix to obtain more middle housing. As it is currently written, Section 22(1)(f) has no requirement that middle housing or affordable housing replace the demolished historic structure. It has NO connection to the bill's goal. Demolition reviews put power back in community stakeholders to find solutions to preserving their beloved historic districts or buildings, while also addressing real problems like the housing shortage.