

Submitter: Hali Knight

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

Please remove Section 22(1)(f) from this bill.

The intent of HB 2138 is to create more middle housing in Oregon, which I generally support. As written, middle or affordable housing is not required as a condition for removing a demolition review process.

Oregon has over 138 National Register Historic Districts and thousands of designated homes across our state. So this section of the bill, if retained, would greatly impact these historic places, potentially leading to unrestricted demolition. This new rule would eliminate the minimal protection of a process that is designed to review and balance the needs of local communities and their historic homes and places.

- Demolition review does NOT equal automatic demolition denial. It is a weighing of the public benefit of retention vs replacement.
- Demolition review is the only protection we offer in Oregon - to remove it will nullify Oregon's Land Use Goal 5 for historic resources.
- Removing demolition review denies the public a voice (counter to Land Use Goal 1). The community or stakeholder group should have an opportunity to weigh in on places that matter to them and reflect their heritage. Should the developer be the only voice?
- Demolition is forever and more demolition works against our climate goals
- The most sustainable building is an existing building. Most of the carbon impact of buildings comes from the production of materials. Demolition does not support the state's goals for reducing carbon emissions. Many historic structures have high quality materials and unregulated demolition would perpetuate wasting our valuable resources.
- The demolition review process has been shown to balance the public benefit and often has helped create more housing, not hindering it.
- As 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.
- Historic designation requires rigorous research and vetting to prove cultural significance. They should not be erased without careful consideration.
- No protection + no restoration & reuse incentives = Oregon dead last in the U.S. for stewardship of its heritage places
- How can we move the needle for increased housing in heritage areas? Create a better inclusive "both-and" strategy that would add more units within designated historic areas through an incentive package for adapting existing residential, add ADUs, add triplexes on non-contributing properties, etc.

