

Submitter: Aaron Smith

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 it is written, there is no requirement that middle or affordable housing replace a demolished structure. This section has no connection to the bill's goal.

Demolition review does NOT equal automatic demolition denial. It is a weighing of the public benefit of retention vs replacement. Historic designation requires rigorous research and vetting to prove cultural significance. These landmarks should not be erased without careful consideration. Removing demolition review denies the public a voice (counter to Land Use Goal 1). The community and stakeholder groups should have an opportunity to weigh in on places that matter to them and reflect their heritage. The developer should not be the only voice.

Further, demolition review is the only protection we offer historic landmarks in Oregon - to remove it will nullify Oregon's Land Use Goal 5 for historic resources. With no protection and no restoration or reuse incentives, Oregon will be dead last in the U.S. for stewardship of its historic places. This provision will cause irreversible harm without providing any public benefit.