

Submitter: Fred LEESON

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB974

Greetings. I am Fred Leeson, a Portland resident who cares about (and writes about) Portland's urban environment. I have attended many Portland Design Commission hearings over several years.

I urge you to reject measures in Section 12 and 13 that would remove design review. These hearings give nearby residents opportunities to comment on large new buildings that could affect their local environments for decades to come. They also allow intelligent design commissioners to make suggestions about open space, setbacks and design materials that will improve the buildings and the immediate surroundings.

The quality of our urban environment is important to residents now and for many years to come. Speeding up the design process will not result in better buildings.

I recall one design review meeting where developers of a large new building in the Old Town neighborhood placed the natural gas meter adjacent to the sidewalk. A design review commissioner who was an architect objected. "The job of the architect is to clean up messes," he said. The developer thereupon figured out a means of keeping the meter inside the building and out of the public right-of-way. I think of this whenever I drive or walk by.

Please, let's not remove the opportunities to improve new buildings that will affect our lives for many years ahead.

Thank you for the honor of submitting testimony.
Fred Leeson