

March 17, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am a registered architect and a Design Commissioner in the City of Portland and I oppose the elimination of Design Review as proposed in the **SB974 -1 Amendment** “Section 12 (5)” on page 10 and “Section 13 (5)” on page 11.

Design Review in Portland is administered by experienced staff and by the Design Commission both of whom support all housing types, high density, and a streamlined process, and who are passionate about Portland’s growth and resurgence. Design Review in Portland does not apply to small residential development and is limited to areas of the City slated for significant growth to ensure development in neighborhood cores will have positive impacts.

As an Architect having worked on several projects subject to Design Review including housing, I can confirm the process has had a deeply positive impact on the quality of the design, both for future residents, as well as for the broader community. In addition to requiring that the design itself meet the Citywide Design Guidelines to address neighborhood context, the public realm, and quality and resilience, the Design Review process allows space for public testimony and civic engagement. In the City of Portland, the Design Review process aligns with the standard project delivery timelines and can overlap with building permit review in such a way as to not delay project schedules. The cost of Design Review is minimal in the scope of project construction budgets.

Design Review in Portland ensures that everyone, including those living in low-income affordable housing are provided with the opportunity to live in durable, safe and well-connected developments. The process ensures development promotes a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly streetscape and waterfront, and strengthens neighborhoods by guiding development to improve visibility, safety and access to and within the public realm.

We hope the buildings we construct today will still be serving our cities fifty years into the future. Eliminating the requirement of Design Review for housing developments would be a short-sighted response to the immediate need for more affordable housing as the benefits to the future of our cities far outweigh the current minimal cost and schedule impacts of the process.

Sincerely,

Sarah Vaz, RA, LFA, CPHC, DC