

Submitter: Stacy Bengtson

March 26, 2025

Chair Sosa, Vice Chairs Chaichi and Osborne, and Members of the Committee,

I, the undersigned, urge the Oregon State Legislature to pass House Bill 2141-1, establishing the voluntary Registered Commercial Interior Design Title Act to recognize, protect, and enhance the role of Commercial Interior Designers in Oregon.

I have worked in Commercial Interior Design for 20 years at five distinct Design and/or Architecture firms, big and small. I recently started my own Commercial Interior Design practice, specializing in Workplace / Office remodels in existing buildings. I believe that legislation like this differentiates those of us in our profession that have 'leveled' up (through lived experience, accredited education & appropriate testing). This legislation will also raise public awareness that our profession in the commercial realm has and needs minimum qualifications related to the interior built environment.

Although Oregon Statute 671.030 allows for non-registered design professionals to prepare drawings in limited scopes or 'exempt' buildings (as defined in both ORS & Oregon Structural Specialty Code), there are still examples of unnecessary restrictions to our profession, which a bill like this would help clarify.

I will give a specific example I was recently made aware of- The City of Sherwood adopted Oregon's Accela online permitting system late last year, which should be a great thing to *expedite* permits. However, if an applicant is not a 'registered professional' (with an Oregon assigned registration number), one cannot proceed in the system to submit permit drawings, even though the scope and preparation of the drawing set by an unregistered professional is legally allowed as defined in ORS 671. Instead, I, as an unregistered interior designer, would have to ask the general contractor to submit for permit, because they have a CCB license. Why is that an issue? First, it sends a message that I am not allowed to do this type of work, even though Oregon law allows it for specific interior project types. Second, what if this is a fast-track tenant improvement project and a building owner wants permitting to occur at the same time they bid the project to multiple contractors (a process that happens frequently on interior remodels). Without a specific contractor in mind, permitting must wait. This unnecessarily slows down typically standard processes.

While I have only experienced this specific issue in Sherwood, there have been other examples cited in other testimonies to this bill, of jurisdictions not accepting permit drawing submissions

that fall into the category of work that Oregon law has allowed practitioners such as myself to complete code-compliant drawings for. Commercial Interior Designers need a means to 'prove' our qualifications, and this bill would help immensely.

To reiterate,

Why This Matters

Oregon lacks legal recognition for Commercial Interior Designers, despite our critical role in designing safe, accessible, and code-compliant spaces.

HB 2141 will:

- Recognize the profession
- Ensure public safety & consumer protection
- Expand economic opportunities for women, small business owners, and independent practitioners

HB 2141 does NOT:

- Change or limit the work of architects, engineers, or residential designers
- Expand scope or require mandatory registration
- Allow structural, seismic, or exterior work

Thank you,

Stacy Bengtson, NCIDQ LEED AP

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