

Submitter: Saurav Palla

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

Greetings Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iversen, and members of the committee. My name is Saurav Palla and I'm a resident of the Goose Hollow neighborhood in Portland and member of Portland: Neighbors Welcome, a pro-housing, volunteer-run organization, here to testify in support of House Bill 2138.

I'd like to start off by expressing my support and excitement for this bill. The bill with the current amendments includes a plethora of changes that will enable Oregon to build more of the homes that it desperately needs to tackle our housing crisis. These changes will also enable Oregon cities to combat excessive urban sprawl, create more missing middle homes, and build in a way that's better for city budgets and the environment. Progressing this bill is an important step in ensuring that Oregon remains a place of opportunity, livability, and affordability for current and future Oregonians.

However, I did want to express my disappointment over the removal of Section 22 (f) from the original bill, which lessened the burden of onerous design and historic district restrictions. We've seen how these undemocratic and singularly focused commissions have been abused to prevent housing from being built in Oregon's high-opportunity and most-livable neighborhoods to appease a minority of loud voices. I would highly encourage the members of this committee to re-evaluate adding that language back into the bill to empower Oregon cities with the flexibility to address their housing needs, while protecting historically significant structures as determined by all residents, rather than just a small group of property owners. Retaining our architectural heritage is important, but it shouldn't come at the expense of ensuring that every Oregonian has a place to call home.