

CITY OF NEWPORT

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May 9, 2023

Chair Julie Fahey
House Committee on Rules
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

It is our understanding that your committee will hold a hearing this afternoon on -5 and -6 amendments to HB 3414, a bill introduced on behalf of Governor Kotek to promote housing construction by requiring cities approve variances/adjustments to certain land use standards. If you believe that this approach has merit and should advance, then we urge you to support the -5 amendments.

Our City Council has deep concerns with the variance/adjustment concept embedded in this bill. When a local government approves a variance/adjustment, it is authorizing someone to use their property in a manner that others cannot. This has always required there be justification to support such an action. Section 2 of the -6 amendments requires no justification. There is no requirement that a developer establish that a variance/adjustment will accelerate the pace of residential development, result in additional residential units, or enhance affordability. Section 2 of the -5 amendments, on the other hand, requires a developer demonstrate that these objectives will be achieved. If we are to be compelled to grant variances/adjustments to clear and objective land use standards that the City has taken pains to craft in a manner that meets community objectives, then it is imperative that we realize additional housing, or more affordable housing, as a result. Section 2 of the -5 amendments provides that assurance.

We here in Newport share your concerns about the lack of affordable housing, and we have taken tangible steps over the last 10-15 years to facilitate the construction of such housing in our community. More needs to be done, and we recognize that, and hope that the legislature will partner with us to achieve this shared objective. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dean Sawyer, Mayor
City of Newport, Oregon

Spencer Nebel, City Manager
City of Newport, Oregon

xc Representative David Gomberg
Senator Dick Anderson