

Submitter: Kevin Kincaid
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138
Chair Marsh and members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 2138. As a young Oregonian, I am painfully aware of the high cost of housing. Oregon is dealing with a homeless crisis that has been exacerbated due to our car centric city design and focus on single family homes. This bill will build upon the steps Oregon has already taken to build denser, affordable housing.

For decades, city zoning and housing standards have focused primarily on building suburban single family homes. While this is often pitched as the quintessential American dream, prioritizing this type of housing above all others has spread our population across a much wider area, encroaching upon the natural wildlife, increasing city infrastructure costs, and making it a necessity to own a car. Oregon cannot continue down this path and must work to correct it's mistake.

This bill prioritizes several important issues in order to facilitate building housing. It better defines types of middle housing that cities should allow. It removes unnecessary legal and procedural barriers that cities have used to block denser housing in the past, including accessory dwelling units. And it speeds up residential land divisions for the purpose of developing middle housing. One important aspect of this bill that should not be removed is Section 22(f). The National Register of Historic Places is not the same as a local historic district, the latter of which is more responsive to the will of the community and city. The only modification that should be considered for Section 22(f) is a potential requirement that the demolition review is repealed if the proposed development is for middle housing.

Oregon needs to rapidly adapt in order to resolve the housing crisis we are experiencing. This bill takes good steps, but we also need funding and support for cities or non-profits to build the necessary mixed-use and transit oriented projects in order to help improve communities and reduce car centric-infrastructure. I urge you to pass HB 2138 to ensure that we begin building towards a better tomorrow.

Thank you for your time and consideration.