



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Shawn O'Neil Opposing and Amending SB 974 A-5 and A-7:

Latest Amendments of Proposed Legislation Provide Improvements; However, Section 8 Remains Problematic and Slows Housing Production

Scheduled for public hearing on May 19, 2025, before
the House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying on behalf of the City of Wilsonville in opposition to SB 974 A-5 and A-7 and proposing amendments for consideration at the scheduled May 21 work session. The proposed legislation has been improved considerably from prior versions, and the City greatly appreciates the committee's work to make the bill more achievable .

Wilsonville is one of Oregon's fastest-growing cities for the past 20 years, contributing an estimated 20% of all new housing to the Portland metro area during that time with the largest percentage (50%) of middle-housing and multifamily residential units.

While Wilsonville has some remaining questions on how the limited land use processes will work with zone changes to increase density and variances, the shift to limited land use review for residential development is something the City already plans to explore. The design standards of Section 8 of -5 and -7 remain problematic. The language is poorly constructed and misaligned with the bill's stated focus on streamlining processes.

Moreover, the bill's drafting reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of how and when design standards are applied in practice, on-the-ground by local governments. These standards typically *are not evaluated* at the subdivision level, but rather at the point of ministerial application for individual building permits.

Based on testimony from home-builder advocates, there appears to be a lack of clarity—even among proponents of the bill—regarding the implications of the proposed design-review provisions. As such, the City recommends that the design standards section be removed from the current bill and revisited by an interim work group or in a future legislative session.

If the overarching goal is to reduce procedural delays and regulatory uncertainty, the City could support language that prohibits hearings or even limited land-use processes for design review of residential buildings within the UGB. Design standards, if applied, would be enforced solely through a ministerial process conducted concurrently with building-permit review.

To better align with the bill's intent to expedite housing development, the City proposes the following amendment in bold text for Section 8:

"SECTION 8. (1) A local government may not apply residential design standards to an application for the development of housing within an urban growth boundary except for clear and objective standards applied through a ministerial process concurrent with building permit review, unless the application is for the development of fewer than 20 residential units."

The City of Wilsonville appreciates your consideration and urges opposing SB 974 A-5 and A-7 as presented and urges amendments as outlined in this testimony. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Shawn O'Neil, Mayor
City of Wilsonville