

Submitter: Jim Labbe
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

Dear House Committee on Rules,

I oppose HB 3414. This legislation is predicated on the February 2021 DLCD Regional Housing Needs Analysis that addressed a range of issues and barriers to addressing the State's housing needs which ostensibly are premises of this legislation. But nowhere in the Regional Housing Needs Analysis is there a recommendation for overriding environmental and natural resource regulations to increase housing production. And that is what the thoughtless and indiscriminate provisions of HB 3414 as written would do.

HB 3414 takes Oregon further down road of abandoning Oregon's system of comprehensive statewide planning with little or no benefit to addressing the housing production problem. As written, it could indiscriminately override local regulations that implement the Statewide Planning Goals 5, 6, 15, 16 & 17, Oregon's primary statewide natural resource conservation goals.

Overriding safe guards for water quality, wildlife and environmentally sensitive lands will not significantly address the State's housing needs but it will jeopardize the environmental quality and public health that are supports the other ingredients (other than housing) of healthy, affordable communities.

If this Committee wants to significantly address regulatory barriers to housing supply the answer is not to override the environmental regulations that protect clean water, wildlife, and the state's natural heritage. The solution is to up zone base zones to allow more, smaller, and denser housing units on available land.

But let's be honest. While up zoning base zones would help, reforms to zoning and land use regulations is not going to address a housing production problem. It will not address the lack of adequate tax revenue and public funds to build public infrastructure needed to make build to zoned capacity on buildable land (it may even make this problem worse). It is not going to address the runaway wealth and income inequality that has left too many people unable to afford rent and monthly mortgage payments. It is the hoarding wealth that could otherwise be used finance housing which is a primary the problem that needs to be solved. In that context HB 3414 treats the wrong housing production problem with wrecking ball policies that do collateral damage to the other ingredients of an affordable community. It is another supply-side distraction from the deep structural inequality politicians are unwilling to address, let alone name.

Sincerely
Jim Labbe
North Portland