

Submitter: Amy Whitworth
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB974

I oppose removing Design Review as proposed in the SB974 –1 Amendment
“Section 12 (5)” on page 10 and “Section 13 (5)” on page 11

As a landscape designer in Portland, OR, I value the many impacts good design has on the lives of those it touches. Those that live in well designed buildings, those that live nearby, those that occasionally pass by those buildings, and the city as a whole, all benefit from good design. Well being is not an accident. It happens starting with good design.

Buildings that will stand for over 50 years have a major impact on their neighbors and should be well designed.

Communities embrace denser housing when they're confident it will look good.

Residents of affordable housing deserve good design, too.

Attention to design (i.e., building form, relating to context, durable and low-maintenance materials, energy efficiency, access to sun and light, etc.) are in fact critical ingredients in making buildings more cost efficient and affordable, long-lasting, and livable for ALL incomes.

Design matters: When new larger infill developments relate to their context, they can fit seamlessly. When they don't, they stick out like a sore thumb, calling attention to gentrification and disrupting the success of the business districts.

In my own neighborhood in SE Portland, I have been in community with many new buildings, both well designed and awkward eyesores that are a cheap affront to good community. As a neighborhood, we have advocated for design review and stood for common sense principles that help buildings fit into their surroundings while supporting affordability, density and keeping living trees intact. Now is not the time to abandon design.