

Submitter: Linda Nettekoven
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB974
TO: Senate Committee on Housing Development
RE: SE 974

I am writing in opposition to Sections 12 and 13 (pages 10 & 11) of SB 974 which would remove the use of design review in regard to housing. A well managed design review process has a critical role to play in the future of our cities, where what we build tomorrow will be shaping our environment for generations to come. Suggestions regarding setbacks, design materials, open space, and opportunities to maximize natural heating and cooling can result in better buildings both for those who inhabit them as well as for the surrounding neighborhood. Community members are more likely to embrace denser housing when confident it will look good and improve the overall quality and livability of their neighborhoods. Better design does not need to be more time consuming or mean greater costs in terms of construction techniques or materials; in fact the opportunity to receive advice from peers in the field coupled with additional flexibility often leads to greater efficiencies and more attractive buildings. Portland, for example, uses design review in very limited areas and within carefully considered parameters. Design review has a key role to play as we try to "build back better" on our way to becoming a more economically vibrant and better housed community, for people of all income levels. I acknowledge that design review has been used inappropriately in some places to halt projects or prolong processes needlessly, but there should be a way to allow jurisdictions to keep design review when they are able to demonstrate that it does not result in fewer housing units being built in their communities. To prevent all Oregon jurisdictions from using a tool that has a key role to play would be a mistake. Thank you. Linda Nettekoven