

Submitter: Leslie Comnes
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

I support this bill's overall goal of increasing affordable housing in our state. But I am strongly opposed to Section 22(1)(f) regarding National Register Historic Districts. This provision would allow unchecked demolition of structures in treasured historic neighborhoods in Portland, neighborhoods that characterize our beautiful city. Once our historic buildings and neighborhoods are gone, they'll be gone--you cannot bring them back.

As the provision does not require the new structures built after demolition to be affordable, I believe it will actually worsen affordability. In my neighborhood (Laurelhurst), 25% of the homes are already "non-contributing," meaning that they do not have the same review requirements for demolition as "contributing" homes. Here, small more-affordable 2-bedroom homes are regularly replaced with huge, lot-filling, multi-level, and very expensive mansions - which reduces affordability.

We should work toward affordable without losing the assets our cities already have. I urge you to strike this provision from the bill.

Thank you!