

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

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

My name is Zach and I live in the Buckman neighborhood in Portland. I join Portland: Neighbors Welcome in supporting House Bill 2138, which will allow more people to be able to call walkable neighborhoods like mine home. I recently watched some friends, a young couple, struggle to secure housing which would allow each of them to travel independently, as a one-car household. The root of their struggle was that there simply are not enough homes in such neighborhoods. This bill would be a massive step forward in cutting the red tape that prevents these homes from being built, and would help more Oregonians everywhere find homes that fit their life circumstances.

I also specifically urge the committee to retain the language in SECTION 22. (1), which repeals the requirement for demolition review for houses which are listed as "contributing" in National Register Historic Districts. Undemocratic and landowner-controlled National Register of Historic Places districts are distinct from local historic districts that have democratic oversight from a body — the city council — that is legally allowed to consider any factors other than historic preservation, and can consider the interests of tenants as well as landowners. This bill retains Oregon cities' ability to preserve historical resources and does not impact local historic districts, but grants cities the flexibility they need to address our ongoing housing crisis and ensure that we can build housing for Oregonians of all ages, wages, and stages of life.

Thank you.