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**House Committee on Housing and Homelessness**

Chair Marsh

Vice-Chair Anderson

Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson

Members of the Committee

**House Bill 2138 – Middle Housing**

While generally supportive of middle housing in Oregon, we also cannot compromise the *safety* of our communities and neighborhoods. We cannot compromise the safety of our elderly, children, families, and pets that live, walk, and bike in our neighborhoods.

To that end, please remove from Section 1 of HB 2138-1 (5)(a) and (5)(c)(A) and (B).

Section 1, (5)(c)(A) and (B) seriously compromises the safety in our neighborhoods by not allowing traffic impact analyses. Some neighborhoods that will be experiencing new middle housing are already densely populated with narrow roads and no sidewalks or bike lanes. At times, traffic impact analyses are necessary for ensuring safety. While generally supportive of middle housing, *safety should always be our top priority*. Middle housing may be necessary, but not at the expense of the safety of our elderly, children, families and pets that live, walk, and bike in our neighborhoods.

Section 1, (5)(a) indicates middle housing cannot be discouraged by local governments **through unreasonable cost or delay** but provides no definition of what this means. Is an unreasonable cost or delay a traffic analysis to help maintain safety of families in our neighborhoods? Is an unreasonable cost or delay related to preservation of historical structures, or important tree canopies or wetlands or management of water run-off? Who decides? Do non-elected employees of a local government decide and dictate to citizens what is an unreasonable cost or delay, or do citizens have a voice in smart development of our neighborhoods?

While generally in favor of middle housing, Oregonians have invested heavily in their homes and neighborhoods and middle housing – any housing – *should be developed with no higher priority than safety and ensuring citizens retain their voice in development in their neighborhoods*.

Increasing middle housing while maintaining safety and the voice of Oregonians *are not mutually exclusive*. There are many provisions in HB 2138 that allow for increased development of middle housing, but let's do it safely and include the voice of the people.