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Dear Governor Kotek: Please Exclude Hillsboro From Your New Housing Package

Punitive Permit and SDC Fees Remain Unaddressed Promoting Inequity

by [Dirk Knudsen](#) — February 9, 2024

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To: [Governor Tina Kotek and Staff](#)

Senate Committee on Housing and Development; Senator Kayse Jama, Senator Dick Anderson, Senator Tim Knopp, Senator Deb Patterson, Senator Sollman

From: Dirk Knudsen, Hillsboro, Oregon

RE: Proposed Senate Bill 1537 – Governor Kotek’s Housing Package

Hello, Governor Kotek and Senators;

I am writing today (2-9-2024) because I had signed up to testify online at the 2-8-2024 Hearing for SB 1537, I got confirmation that I was registered on 2-5-24 and would be sent instructions on how to sign in, but nothing was sent. As a result, I was excluded from the hearing and not allowed to present my testimony. Here it is.

My name is Dirk Knudsen, and I have lived in Hillsboro, Oregon, for five decades. For 43 years, I have been in real estate, housing, and land use consulting, providing housing for all people. I have focused on community and state-wide land use issues for that entire time, and I am currently an



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active member of the Build Small Coalition here in Oregon. My testimony is based on real-world experiences and thousands of successful housing efforts.

The Governor's Housing package leaves much to be desired. I am generally in support of it. It will provide many benefits to those of us in the housing industry and even more to those in need who can have a home- for many, their first home. The goals are so important. So I am with you all. Having said that, please reconsider the following:

- **Senate Bill 2001 (Middle Housing)** was a massive step toward providing meaningful housing inside our existing Urban Growth Boundaries. The promise of those additional units has been realized in many Oregon cities, helping revitalize neighborhoods and adding housing units in existing transit, shopping, parks, and school areas. However, the State of Oregon did not provide any teeth or serious monitoring on how cities implement Middle Housing. As a result, cities with a conservative approach, like Hillsboro (Oregon), one of the most housing-challenged in the State, have little to no units built.
- Hillsboro is in the midst of adding the biggest housing project in Oregon history to its Urban Growth Boundaries. South Hillsboro will have 8,000 units when completed and upwards of 30,000 people. These homes are not affordable and average in the \$700,000 range per unit. These are certainly not homes that the majority of our current citizens can buy.
- Hillsboro is also the planned location of almost all future Tech and Semiconductor Jobs as per **Senate Bill 4 (The CHIPS ACT)**, with the potential for over 1,700 acres to be added to the UGB for industry in our town. Governor Kotek, you dictated that.
- Hillsboro is walking into the worst housing crisis in the History of Oregon if these jobs come to our town and the City does not improve upon its housing policies.
- The City of Hillsboro just approved its 2024 Housing Needs analysis and is fighting with the Department of **Land Use Conservation and Development** and **METRO** over the growth rate to project future housing. The push to grow our Urban Growth Boundary is on, and developers and land owners are all lined up to hit the UGB expansion jackpot, where land will be brought into the growth boundary and sold at record prices, assuring more housing out of reach of the populace.
- **HILLSBORO HAS INEQUITABLE POLICIES ON PERMITS COSTS- THIS POINT YOU MUST READ:** Despite clear language and analysis from their consultant Eco-NW Consulting, Hillsboro will not adjust permit fees for Middle Housing or even for regular housing.
 - Small homes are charged the same SDCs as massive homes.



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- **Important Middle Housing Options like Cottages have permitting costs as high as \$100 per square foot!!!**
- Despite being presented with written documents, oral testimony, and case studies, the City Of Hillsboro City Council, City Manager and Planning Staff refuse to take any action on this matter.
- As a result, the City of Hillsboro, one of the biggest in the State and fastest growing, has NO middle Housing units completed. That is proof of the level of this problem.

For your reference, here is part of the ECO-NW study provided to the City Of Hillsboro. To date, the City staff and Councilors have not wanted to acknowledge these important points. The same people, 110%, are supporting the ECO-NW study on the Hillsboro Hops Stadium, and Senator Sollman and others are now asking your body and offices for Millions in help on that matter. So the facts show they only believe what they want to believe to serve politically popular agendas- infill Housing in Hillsboro [provided for by SB 2001 has been scoffed at by the Planning Commission members who did what they could to accept it and minimize it at the same time. The Fees in question have been weaponized to stop Middle Housing and meaningful execution and building of Middle Housing. These same leaders generally display disdain for anything handed down to our City by the State, as evidenced by the new Climate initiatives the City is fighting so hard. Have a read at what the experts said.

- **Variable SDCs:** Varying SDCs with unit size would generally require a methodology update, and would need to be done for each type of SDC independently. However, some jurisdictions have simply established a reduced rate for small units and backfilled the difference from other sources, which does not require an update to methodology.
- **Status:** The existing SDC rates from the City of Hillsboro and other service providers are not differentiated by unit size, as noted below.
 - **Water SDCs:** Vary by meter size, which is somewhat correlated with unit size.
 - **Parks SDCs:** Flat SDC for all housing units for citywide fee; rate differentiated by single family vs. multifamily for South Hillsboro Supplemental SDC.
 - **South Hillsboro Supplemental TSDC:** Rate differentiated by housing type (single-family detached vs. apartment vs. condo/townhomes) based on trip generation data from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) but not unit size.
 - **TDT:** Rate differentiated by housing type (single-family detached vs. apartment vs. condo/townhomes) based on trip generation data from ITE but not unit size.
 - **Sewer and Surface Water:** Flat rate by equivalent dwelling unit (EDU).



The State must mandate changes to these sorts of codes to protect our people from continued housing policies that discriminate against the people who need the most help!

CASE STUDY:



We have land in Hillsboro, and we want to use middle housing to place four cottages. One was for my Mother. **Her cottage would have been 400 square feet** in a common garden like this one. The others were going to be for other Seniors and priced at a low rent to help them. This was her dream and would have changed the quality of her life and the lives of others.

I went to the City of Hillsboro building department, where a set of fee and permit estimates were given to build these units. A staggering cost of \$49,500 was estimated per unit, **totaling \$ 123 per square foot! Much of that was Systems Development Charges!**

Compare and Contrast:



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This is a home that a client of mine built near the cottage site we have. 1 Block to the MAX light rail and a 5-minute walk to INTEL Ronler Acres. This home is:

- 9 Bedrooms and 10 bathrooms
- It has two full kitchens and multiple living areas
- Is 4,200 SF apx.
- How much were the building permits and SDCs? **\$50,000 – or \$12 per square foot!**
- It is an important home as it does provide living for up to 9 people.

Impacts and Costs are similar, but Usage is vastly different- The big home has 10 or 11 Toilets on the same type of sewer line with the same fees that my Mom's cottage would have had only one on. The big house generates dozens of trips on our roads- Mom would have generated none. 9 people can use parks, schools, and city services in the big home. Mom, just one. The impacts of



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a huge house dwarf the impacts of a small cottage, and as a result, the upfront SDC fees must be prorated or scaled on total square footage or occupancy.

Affordable Tiny Cottage – \$112 PSF in Fees VS Huge Luxury Home – \$12 PSF in Fees

Governor and Senators, how can you allow this? How can you make a housing policy with hundreds of millions in taxpayers' money and allow this to continue in any City in Oregon? To do so would equate to a failed policy, expanded UGBs over all else, no important infill and middle housing, and a fleecing of the taxpayer's money.

Therefore, please add policies and rules that exclude cities with punitive housing policies like those I have stated above from Participating in the robust benefits and the money you are providing through Senate Bill 1537. **PLEASE EXCLUDE MY HOMETOWN OF HILLSBORO** from participating in SB 1537

until they eliminate these horrible housing policies that punish the marginalized, those less fortunate, and those of us trying to help their Mothers.

Despite my appearance at City Council 3 times to state this matter and ask for changes, multiple emails, and exchanges with the Planning Commission and Planning Staff, there was no action or movement. My mother will never get her dream cottage- she passed away last Fall.

Please LISTEN to my testimony and consider your Moms and all the people of our community and others where antiquated codes and policies are punishing them and treating them as something less than those who are more fortunate. **WE MUST ELIMINATE INEQUITY WHEREVER WE FIND IT.** You have been made aware of it in my town, and now, should you fail to act, you are promoting it and supporting it. That is not who you are and not who we are as a State!

I thank you for your time and ask for your support!

Very truly yours,



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Dirk T Knudsen

Hillsboro, Oregon

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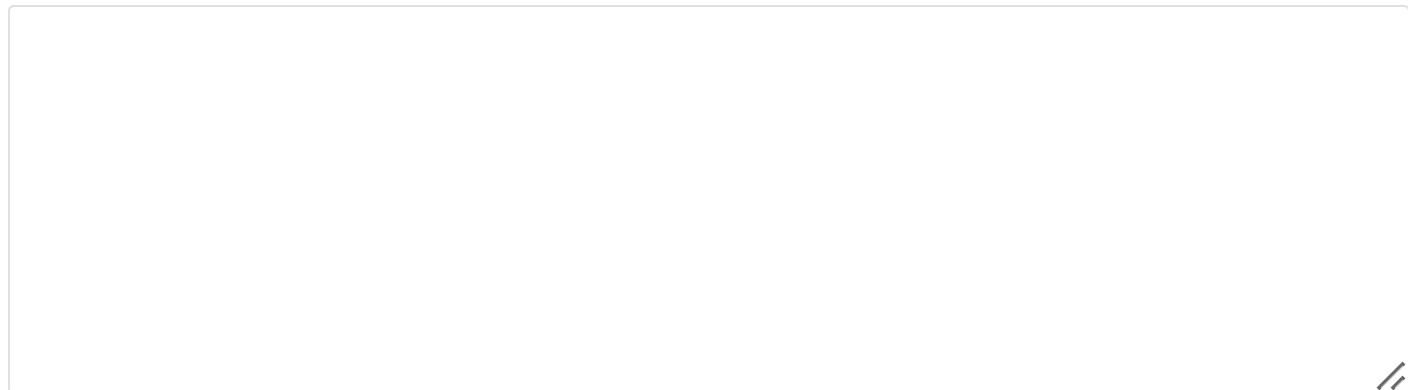
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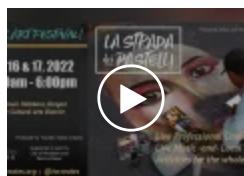
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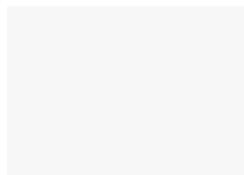
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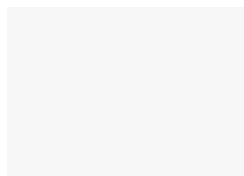
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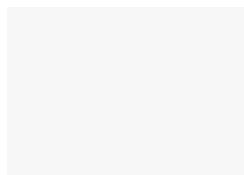
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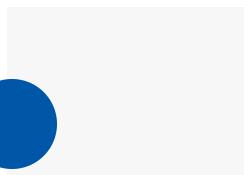
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