

Submitter: Grace Jeffreys

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure: HB3414

I am very concerned about House Bill 3414. This bill would undermine the work cities have been doing to encourage the development of cottage clusters and other middle housing types, as well as to protect tree canopy, wetlands and other sensitive areas.

All cities in Oregon have struggled to keep up with mandates from the state, including the 2019 middle housing statute, the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rule and the new enhanced Housing Needs Analysis work. The state should give these efforts a few years to take root before considering the type of far-reaching steps proposed in HB 3414, which would give DEVELOPERS wide latitude to bypass city codes, not just on design elements but on size, on tree, wetland and habitat conservation requirements.

Most startlingly, the proposal to force cities to grant variances on such codes is not tied to the building of affordable housing. It seems quite possible that in many communities HB 3414 would lead to the construction of large expensive homes and actually undermine efforts to provide housing at a broader range of affordability points.

Cities need partnerships, not mandates. We need tools, not rules -- tools that allow cities to craft code that incentivizes developers to align with shared goals around housing production and hold them accountable for those results. The Legislature should shelve HB 3414.