

March 24, 2023

Testimony in FAVOR of HB 3569

Chair Dexter, Vice Chair Helfrich and members of the committee,

My name is Natalie Janney and I am a civil engineering with Multi/Tech Engineering. We design primarily subdivision and multi-family projects throughout Oregon. I am also a member of Governor Kotek's Housing Production Advisory Council.

I would like to voice my support of HB 3659.

There are a lot of places in the development process that have uncertainty. One big area of uncertainty in land development is during the land use process. Projects that are allowed based on the land zoning still receive a lot of push-back from surrounding neighbors on a regular basis. Whether it is multi-family projects or single family homes, it is rare to find a neighborhood that supports development adjacent to them. This Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) mentality can have a definite impact on how projects are able to develop, even on projects where the underlying zoning is meant for housing.

We had a multi-family project on an infill site that was adjacent to single family homes partially on one side of the project. The abutting neighbor was opposed to the project and stated they would rather have a gas station next to them rather than apartments (I've heard adjacent property owners say even worse things than this, unfortunately).

During the land use process, the local governing body had a definite history of limiting or restricting development near single family properties. In order to get the project approved, we had to make several design concessions in order to get the project approved. These included reducing the number of units, installing a taller fence, installing more lighting, and adding more mature and dense landscaping.

While I don't have a concrete dollar amount that these changes cost, it has a cost in addition to an overall loss of units. And these are requirements outside of the code that were imposed on property that allows high-density development.

This is just one example that happens over and over resulting in a loss of units and increase in costs. Whether it is affordable housing or market rate, we should not be imposing extra standards that reduce density and increase costs. While the needed housing statutes should be addressing this issue, they do not go far enough. This bill will help ensure that projects are able to develop to their fullest extent in areas that already allow housing. If we are going to radically increase our housing production and improve housing affordability, we need to approach the topic from all sides.

Thank you for your time and consideration.


Natalie Janney, P.E.