

Dear Representatives,

I write to express my opposition to HB2001 on the basis that it will do little to alleviate the problem of housing affordability but will bring many negative consequences.

Let's be clear, there is no mandate in HB2001 that affordable housing will be constructed. It is legislation that hinges on a single premise: building more housing (even if that is expensive housing) will trickle down and eventually comprise future housing stock that is more affordable. The fact is, there is no evidence that demonstrates this will lead to better economic outcomes or provide housing that is affordable to the broad populations in Oregon.

To make such significant changes to zoning throughout the state, I would expect that the state should provide extensive research and data to support its position. In 2017, the state passed legislation to require the allowance of ADUs in cities throughout the state. We were told then that this would lead to more housing and ease the pressure on the cost of homes and rents. Have we seen the benefits of this? Has it produced the benefits we were promised it would? The responsible thing would be to test and evaluate different proposals and then measure the impact. We don't know if this has been successful. And before we pass even more sweeping legislation from the authors of SB1051 (the 2017 ADU bill), we should gauge their credibility on these issues.

Without a mandate to create housing that is truly affordable, we should not reasonably expect the free market to do so on its own. What we can expect is more of the same that we've seen...developers will build the most expedient and profitable housing they can. In Portland, this has created a glut of high-end or luxury housing at a higher price than what it replaced. The stories of single homes being replaced with a duplex or two homes each of which are more expensive than what it replaced are common. While each case where this happens means that an additional home is created, it has worsened affordability for everyone.

We must look at the negative impacts of this kind of legislation. HB2001 will help developers and investors make money but will not help Oregonians. But our citizens will see and experience the following...

- * Large numbers of demolitions which will remove tree canopy and displace renters
- * Reduced livability by increasing density significantly
- * Increased traffic congestion
- * Strain on infrastructure as communities were not originally designed to support significantly higher densities
- * Massive increase in the relative cost of housing

Drawing on this last bullet point, I want to point out that HB2001 will encourage more housing, but at a much higher relative cost to owners/renters. To recoup development costs, new units will be more expensive (as measured by square footage). In other words, you'll get a lot less for your money. As real estate prices are closely tied to surrounding prices and rates, this will push up the prices for all existing housing. This makes the problem of affordability worse.

Consequently, the people HB2001 claims it will help, are further marginalized. They are the ones most likely to be evicted and displaced. They are most likely to be pushed further away from the city core. If we want to truly create affordable housing, we should seek solutions that produce it, rather than wishful-thinking policies that are likely to enrich developers and investors at the expense of residents.

As a final comment, I'd like to ask "Who is this for?" This legislation is meant to advantage developers. Why else would it include Section 6 that prevents local governments from charging developers system development charges? Why else would it have a one-sided award of attorney fees for applicants as outlined in Section 8? Why else would it aim to circumvent broad public participation in this discussion? The City of Portland has been engaged in a multi-year proposal known as the Residential Infill Project. Despite its short-comings, the process has been public and attempts to be transparent. This is consistent with Statewide Planning Goal 1 - Citizen Involvement. Passing this at the state-level at Salem, where legislators such as sponsor Speaker Kotek are cozy with special interests and the Home Builders Association should raise a lot of concerns.

For these, and many other reasons, I am proposed to HB2001. I strongly urge our legislators to facilitate each community to develop common-sense, effective policies that will address the housing availability and affordability in ways that work for each community.

Sincerely,

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