

Dear Senators,

Proposed Senate Bill 8 is a solution in search of a problem and a clear violation of the spirit, text, and intent of State Planning Goal 1 - Citizen Involvement not to mention due process. There is no evidence to support the idea that needed development is being widely thwarted by frivolous LUBA Appeals that pose an undue burden on developers. SB 10 is simply a sop to developers and the former developers and architects who seem to staff many of the so-called housing advocacy groups pushing for draconian intrusions into cities' land use processes.

The contempt for general public in these efforts is breathtaking. SB 10 is the legislature buying into the idea, as explained to be an alleged advocate, that neighbors are too self-interested to make the "right" choices on housing so need to be taken out of the process. The arrogance here is sickeningly elitist.

Unfortunately, this is yet another bill that paints middle and working class homeowners and the neighborhood associations that often represent them as the villains in the housing crisis. How have we come to a place where the foundation of democracy and upward mobility (what is left of it) is the problem? When did middle and working class homeowners and the neighborhood associations who were lauded for their hard work reclaiming our urban core neighborhoods become the villains? Now that neighborhoods are livable and attractive and the hard dangerous work is done they want to monetize us. This is not about housing, it is about profit.

For this issue, it is important to look at who has the most financial and legal resources - it is certainly not the homeowners or neighborhood associations involved in any land use dispute. And now developers, who already hold all the cards and have vastly greater financial and legal resources need "protection" by the state from the public?

This bill seems to assume that people are cavalier about challenging development. As a neighborhood leader, we struggle to just keep the lights on and provide basic services and programs. We have little time to review land use applications. Neighbors are also similarly stretched and broadly have a libertarian view on land use. It is only in the most egregious cases that neighbors oppose land use decisions or are so motivated as to take on the onerous task of taking issues to LUBA. In fact, what we have found is that errors or omissions by city staff - the approval of things that should not have been approved via misinterpretation of code or violation of process rules and NOT simply disliking a proposed development - drives most appeals. SB 8 proposes to further victimize the public by shifting the burden onto them.

Neighborhoods need help, not harassment. Our neighborhoods are already gentrifying and becoming less affordable. This is largely unavoidable, but does not need the state to pour gasoline on the fire. Help us protect our existing affordable housing stock and rentals. We are not the villains here and developers do not need the state to further tip the balance of power in their favor.

I urge you to reject this terrible, anti-democratic bill.

Ted M. Coopman, Chair

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