Dear House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use,

Please support HB 2003 at your hearing on March 5, 2019. This bill could be very helpful in addressing Oregon's housing crisis by removing unnecessary barriers to affordable housing development. I like every aspect of HB 2003, especially how it would:

--authorize the Secretary of State to audit and challenge local system development charges that inappropriately raise the cost of housing;
--require any party that challenges an affordable housing project before the Land Use Board of Appeals and loses to pay the developer's attorney fees;
--assign local governments the burden of proving on appeal the necessity of reducing density or height in a housing development application; and
--allow nonresidential places of worship to develop multiple affordable dwellings on land where nonresidential place of worship is an allowed use.

All of these would help to discourage local governments and neighborhood associations from creating frivolous and unjustifiable obstructions to housing development.

For example, here in Portland the Northwest District Association is inexcusably appealing to LUBA a unanimous City Council decision to allow a building with 148 units of affordable senior housing in NW Portland. This appeal is meritless and will surely be rejected, as the NWDA probably understands. Their strategy seems to be to exhaust the developers with an interminable legal process, creating a series of unnecessary delays and expenses for the sole purpose of making the project financially unsustainable. If HB 2003 passed and the NWDA had to pay the developers' attorney fees after it loses all its appeals, maybe it would give up and stop filing frivolous appeals. Then it would be much easier to get urgently needed affordable housing built in NW Portland.

Best wishes,
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