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Senator Michael Dembrow and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Oregon's historic buildings matter to all of us. They're part of our shared culture, our neighborhoods, and our distinct identity. But, today, decisions about the demolition or preservation of arguably historic buildings are left to the property owner alone—sometimes, an out-of-state owner with no interest in the rich stories that have built every community in Oregon.

It's time to involve the full community around decisions about historic sites and properties and to help influence property owners to think twice before demolishing the buildings that give our region its identity.

SB 927, the Public Participation in Preservation Act, brings the public into important discussions about historic designations. By including the community in these decisions, instead of just owners, Oregonians will have a say about which historic places are worthy of official designation and protection from short-sighted demolition.

Oregon's current "owner consent" law prevents a local jurisdiction from designating a historic property or district without 100% consent - every owner. Even one property owner can thwart the designation of an entire district. No other state has an owner consent law where government land use designation can be vetoed by a single individual.

Senate Bill 927 replaces "owner consent" with open public processes - public notice, public hearing, and an appealable decision. The bill preserves all existing protections for existing National Register Historic Districts.

Historic preservation, at its best, is a community-driven process that protects the resources that matter most to a town or city. I like to think that's "the Oregon way." Please support SB 927.

Sincerely,

Christine D'Arcy

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