

February 25, 2021
Paxton Rothwell
Portland, OR 97212

House Committee on Housing
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Paxton Rothwell, I live in NE Portland, and I am an organizer with Sunrise PDX. Sunrise is a national youth led climate justice movement that focuses on centering the communities that have been disproportionately affected by climate change in the conversation about pursuing a future where the planet and the people are put above profits.

I support HB 2558 as a stepping stone to a further reaching goal of creating walkable neighborhoods surrounding transit stops. The application distance of $\frac{1}{8}$ mile that this bill proposes is far too short of what would be beneficial. Portland's MAX system has routes that run parallel to major freeways and, if $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mile is maintained, would preclude these stops from actually being developed to their fullest potential. I would **strongly recommend** this distance be extended to $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile.

There are many horrors of land use and zoning law that are relics from a bygone age that still exclude to this day. HB 2558 aims to remove some of them. The current barriers to build dense housing near transit stops essentially bars these transit systems from functioning as designed. We need people from all walks of life to be able to live near and use rapid public transit in order for these systems to have the ridership they were designed for. The cities of Oregon in the future will need to be designed in ways that are not reliant on cars, I believe HB 2558 is a step in the right direction to make that future a reality.

I'm sure you will get a lot of opposition for this bill, most truly progressive bills do. Opponents seek to preserve their community as is. While they believe they are speaking for what is 'right' they are using the crutch of exclusion and the stance that "I was here first" to prevent people from joining their community. This process mirrors the Oregon Constitution's exclusion of Black people from the State to a startling degree and helps perpetuate that black stain on this state. The NIMBY opponents fail to realize, as we all often do, this land is not our land. It is unceded Naitive territory that was stolen from those people not even 200 years ago.

A truly diverse community consists of people of all colors, creeds, genders, and economic classes. By allowing dense residential housing by right near transit stops, Oregon can begin to create truly diverse communities. Further, this bill would help slow the displacement of the poor population from inner Portland to East Portland and Gresham, where they must be more car reliant.

This bill, like most other land use bills, seems like there always has to be a loser. In my opinion, if dense and walkable neighborhoods are developed due to the land use bill, I think everyone wins because there will be a healthier, less polluted world for everyone due to the lesser need of these residents to drive or own cars.

Thank you for considering this bill, I hope you vote to move it forward to the floor. Thank you for allowing me to give this testimony today.

Sincerely,
Paxton Rothwell