

Submitter: David Binnig

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB2984

Chair Dexter and Committee members,

Oregon has both an ongoing housing crisis and a new challenge of unused commercial space with the rise of remote work: we have too few homes where people need them, and too many vacant offices in our downtowns. By waiving system development charges for commercial-to-residential conversions, HB 2984 would remove obstacles to those conversions, making it easier to adapt existing buildings to current needs.

System development charges can play an important role in funding parks and infrastructure, but vacancies in existing commercial buildings represent already-accounted-for infrastructure capacity that's currently being underused. With the decline in office work, downtown Portland has beautiful parks and too few people visiting them.

While the 120% AMI requirement has the goal of supporting workforce housing, the cost requirement is a potential obstacle that could limit the bill's application, preventing the conversions that could bring vacant space back into use. Passing HB 2984 while simplifying it to remove the limitation to workforce housing would better support its goals, reducing cost pressure on existing homes while bringing more people and more life to downtown business districts.

Sincerely,
David Binnig
Portland