



March 18, 2023

Hon. Maxine Dexter, Chair
Hons. Mark Gamba and Jeffrey Helfrich, Vice-Chairs
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
Oregon Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

RE: OPPOSE HB 3569 (As Introduced)

Dear Chair Dexter, Vice Chairs Gamba and Helfrich, and Committee Members,

As Oregon's only statewide non-profit historic preservation organization, Restore Oregon works with thousands of people across the state each year to preserve, reuse, and pass forward the historic places and spaces that embody Oregon's diverse cultural heritage. By helping our fellow citizens preserve our state's unique built, natural and cultural environments, we help celebrate and promote much of what makes Oregon special.

Restore Oregon would like to voice our opposition for HB 3569 as it fails to acknowledge the important role cultural and historic heritage plays in the development of place-keeping throughout the state. Although much of the siting of housing is already subject to clear and objective standards, including with respect to design, there are some places where discretionary review is necessary to aid historically disadvantaged areas that have suffered displacement and cultural decimation through things like urban renewal and damaging alterations to designated historic resources. Discretionary design review for designated historic and cultural treasures is essential for understanding these unique cultural elements and retaining them. For example, the City of Portland's recently adopted South Portland Historic Design Guidelines focus specifically on requiring that new development respond to the cultural and social history of a place:

“Guideline 1.3 – Natural, Cultural and Social History – “The natural, cultural and/or social history of South Portland should be integrated into the design or programming of the new buildings greater than 10,000 square feet in floor area and into infrastructure projects.”

Portland already offers a Type Ix process to allow affordable housing to be reviewed by staff while still requiring the protective approval criteria to ensure the historic features of resources are not lost or otherwise damaged. Portland just rewrote its local code with broad support from housing advocates. This balanced approach to addressing Goal 5—regulations and incentives—is working well and is showing results like the [Anna Mann House](#), [Susan Emmons](#), and [3rd and Ash](#) housing projects. Just these three projects are adding over 400 units of

affordable units into the housing production stream through adaptive re-use and/or infill new construction in a designated historic district or individually listed historic resource.

Notwithstanding the need for discretionary design review, the recently adopted Middle Housing Rules for Medium and Large Cities are quite clear that historic protections cannot be used as a means to reduce density or occupancy to any greater degree than is otherwise permitted in the underlying zone. 660-046-0010(3)(B). This is sufficient to ensure that Oregon's cultural treasures continue to further increase housing supply and choice. HB 3569, as introduced, would not only nullify all of this detailed effort in removing barriers to housing within Goal 5 protected areas, it would continue a well-established trend of displacement and gentrification of culturally diverse areas that deserve protection.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3569 and for taking Restore Oregon's comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Possert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole Possert
Executive Director
Restore Oregon