

Submitter: Paul Demaggio

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I oppose this bill because disciplinary actions for littering, defecating near waterways, campfires in non designated campfire areas, and other illegal actions in public areas must be spelled out in this bill and the associated punishments to those individuals must be spelled out. The typical fines for these actions will likely not work for these resting individuals. So what will be the deterrent for them to do these illegal activities? If the public space, is also shared by all, then we all have a right to clean and safe areas. The right to rest must not make all other users of the public space, especially women and children, feel in danger or feel harrassed by these resting individuals, which is currently the case. The bear creek Greenway between Ashland and Central Point, is a prime example of these concerns. Which is a highly transparent public space meant to be used by all members of the community. We are constantly informing our children (ages 7 and 6) that they should not go down near the river in these public areas due to trash, drug use, and the mental instability of some of these resting individuals. I have actively not taken my family on a bikeride on the Greenway because of the fear of being harrassed by individuals camping, using drugs, depositing their trash, along the Greenway near the river. Our area lives in a heightened state of anxiety and fear in the summer due to risk of fires along the Greenway caused by people resting, as in the Alameda fire of 2020. Therefore, I oppose this bill because it seems to increase the ability of folks to rest in these spaces, which decrease other community members feeling of safety and ability to use these spaces. If this bill were to allow for constant law enforcement presence near these resting individuals, and public trash dumpsters and public restrooms, and detailed actions to encourage responsible use of these public resting spaces, then I would consider supporting this bill.

Thank you for taking my comment into consideration as you work towards a sustainable solution of this issue.

-Paul Demaggio, and family.