

Submitter: Heather Onoday

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I appreciate what this bill is trying to achieve, however it falls short of protecting those who are houseless and others in the community. There is nothing in this that allows for safety in the environment. The point at which someone may proceed with creating "private" space within public space, that allows for activities that are not necessarily appropriate within open public spaces. This includes activities such as intravenous drug use, use of alcohol, defecation/urination, disposal of garbage (chemical, biohazardous, toxic, infectious,) etc. This bill does not propose any solution to clean water, sanitation stations, disposal receptacle, maintenance, or mitigation of disease-spread that can occur when these activities happen within spaces that are public (but treated as private). The transmission of disease via sewage/fecal waste, garbage, and other contaminants is in no way accounted for, yet this bill opens the potential for any public space to be considered an environment for disposal of such wastes. Not having a plan for any sort of sanitation infrastructure before opening all spaces to living, is a public health concern that is already not being properly accounted for. Without planning a precautionary process or solution for this, opening all areas for waste accumulation is irresponsible to all involved. You cannot widely create these private spaces within public spaces without first aligning corresponding spaces to appropriately dispose of wastes, preventing contaminates or dangerous substances left in that environment, or considering how to protect everyone in the community, housed or houseless.