

Date: April 26, 2023

Subject: Testimony Submitted in Response to Oregon House Bill 3501
Sponsored by Representatives CHAICHI; Pham K

After a thorough review of the proposed Oregon Legislature's House Bill 3501 Summary, I respectfully wish to submit my prepared testimony in objection to this Bill as it is written.

I reside in an area along NE Marine Drive (Portland, Multnomah County) that includes over 200 floating and land-based homes. Our area is overseen by a multitude of agencies at the federal, state, county and local levels, that presents quite a complexity when attempting to maintain legal and environmental standards, especially in protected areas such as the Big Four Corners Natural Area that includes necessary well pump houses adjacent to the Columbia River which are protected and maintained by the Multnomah County Drainage District (and federal government). Issues have occurred due to flooding from blocked access to the site having been inaccessible due to homeless camping, swamp-like terrain, many stolen vehicles and trailers, and piles of trash.

We reside along a "High Crash Corridor," as designated (with subsequent renewals of the declaration) by Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler. Multiple accidents and deaths (drivers, pedestrians) have occurred on and along NE Marine Drive, so it is imperative to keep this area clear of campers, debris and any other obstacles that may affect safety of free travel throughout the area.

The area, from time-to-time, has also included homeless campers who have (and still are) impeding free travel along the bike-pedestrian paths that were obviously installed to keep pedestrians and bicyclists out of Harm's Way of vehicle traffic, especially in this "High Crash Corridor".

My lay interpretation of the proposed Bill is more of a restatement and acknowledgement of the failures of local governments and other authorities in their efforts, or lack thereof, to provide housing options and vital services to those who are unhoused and in need. Decriminalizing camping in public places simply will welcome more homeless individuals (and crime) to many municipalities, especially those homeless individuals who wish to, and do live "off of the grid" by choice.

Given the recent funding approved by Oregon Governor Tina Kotek, the more responsible approach is to monitor and hold accountable those government agencies and authorities who receive financial distributions of both Oregon and federal monies to help with homelessness through housing and a variety of other much-needed services. Millions, if not billions, of dollars in funding at all levels to-date seemed to have been spent without any accountability to the citizens of Oregon. By auditing and establishing time-line spending goals, perhaps this would promote more progress toward the ultimate goal of solving homelessness in our state. This would also include monitoring of Not-For-Profit 501(c)(3) organizations that have received funding from the federal level, State of Oregon, county-levels and a variety of other funding sources.

I am unclear as to how the proposed bill is going to serve any meaningful purpose when there's no clear path of course correction and accountability. Simply endorsing litigation and limiting authorities' discretion is only going to place an even more over-bearing demand on the legal system and divert attention away from the real issues at hand, such as productive solutions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Linda Donewald