

Submitter: Colin Meskell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure: HB3501

I strongly oppose this bill. Allowing everyone to just settle down in any public space without time constraint or thought about how that public space will be impacted goes against a century of laws regulating what can be done on public lands. This bill would allow for permanent camps in sensitive watersheds, wetlands, ecosystems, habitats for endangered species and recreation areas. This also allows for anyone to camp whenever and wherever they like as long as they could be perceived as homeless. What is the criteria for that? Is the camper allowed to be asked, or would that be considered harassment?

This bill also makes the homeless campers in public areas exempt from the law, but all other people who wish to use that space criminals if they were to ask those camping to move so that they could use that space as well. Parking would no longer be possible in front of your house or work if a camper decided that they wanted to use that area indefinitely. Overlooks off of a scenic highway would become inaccessible to visitors and the general public. Sidewalks will become so congested that walking around will become difficult. This bill states that as long as human traffic is not impeded, the camper could not be asked to move. Pathways and sidewalks in Portland are already a maze at times forcing pedestrians to walk in the streets or winding around tents, is that impeding human traffic? Who makes that judgement? Current laws already address this, but this law would override that and make it a criminal offense to ask someone to move if your opinion regarding impeding traffic was different from the courts. So if I have to step around someone sleeping in the doorway of my building is that fine? Should I not expect that I should have unencumbered access to my door as long as I am not obstructed from entering? Please do not allow this ill conceived bill become law, or Oregon will become an Eden for the homeless across the Country and tourism to our state will drop lower than it already has.