

I am writing in opposition to HB 3414, even with the –6 amendment. Oregon’s land use planning laws have not caused the problems associated with homelessness or housing costs, but they have prevented Oregon communities from being degraded by the ill-managed urban sprawl experienced in other states. HB 3414 is not likely to solve the problems it purportedly addresses, but is likely to create a mess of unintended consequences and burden cities and counties (along with their tax-paying citizens) with the cost and burden of land use litigation brought by disgruntled applicants.

Neighborhoods can change dynamically and cities and counties are not only better equipped than developers to address that factor, they are better motivated. Stripping cities and counties of the ability to apply their good judgment and knowledge of their communities is more likely to exacerbate the problems of homelessness and the high cost of housing than solve them.

This bill would give developers a multitude of excuses to construct properties that are inconsistent with community livability. For example, the bill would prohibit the granting of variances even when a proposed project runs counter to factors that indicate the project would likely result in higher crime rates, such as lack of an appropriate employment base, residential instability, and the displacement of long-term residents.

There is a reason why current land use laws do not allow developers an almost unrestrained ability to dictate projects that are inconsistent with the livability of our communities. Keep in mind that while ill-conceived projects might make a developer a lot of money, the consequences of those ill-conceived projects will be borne by Oregon citizens for decades to come. Please keep the current protections in place.

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