

Submitter: Mariah Shevchuk
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

I'm writing to oppose HB 3414 as it currently stands. This bill would not only nullify all of the detailed efforts in removing barriers to housing within historic, natural, and scenic protected areas, it would continue a well-established trend of displacement and gentrification of culturally diverse areas that deserve continued protection. By-right adjustments will break the community trust of local government officials and staff. It would undermine decades of collaboration between historians and historical organizations, preservationists, and local communities to create sensible regulations and procedures that allow new residential development in historic areas.

As currently proposed, HB 3414 would allow developers to bypass city codes and processes in place to protect our built and natural resources, including regulations governing the alteration of landmark properties and new construction in designated districts, without demanding any increased density or level of affordability. It is especially disturbing that there would not be any opportunity for public notice or appeal in the case of any authorized variance.

While the stated intent of HB 3414 is to spur more housing production, the results would do exactly the opposite. Whatever cost savings a developer may realize as a result of eliminating windows, trees, and setbacks should not be passed on to future residents. There are many ways that we can support streamlining and incentivizing housing in a preservation- and climate-friendly manner while not sacrificing our existing resources – both built and natural. I urge you to not pass HB 3414 and instead propose an alternative that is respectful of existing communities and our shared environment.