

Submitter: Kathryn Mills
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

Dear House Committee on Rules,

Please do not advance HB 3414 if Section 2 (variances) remains part of the bill. Our land use regulations are critical for protecting our communities and environment and HB 3414 will allow housing developers virtually unlimited ability to bulldoze those protections. HB 3414 would allow developers to bypass critically important land use regulations, including regulations to protect trees, wetlands, floodplains, and high value habitat. Section 2 of HB 3414 represents one of the biggest rollback of urban environmental protections since the land use planning system was put in place as it would allow housing developers to obtain an unlimited number of variances from a vast array of land use planning regulations without any commitment to lower housing costs or increase housing capacity. HB 3414 is a giveaway to housing developers at the expense of our communities and environment. HB 3414 would allow housing developers to encroach into places like the Willamette River Greenway and other sensitive natural areas. Amendments do not come close to adequately addressing environmental impacts of this legislation. HB 3414 would force municipalities to give variances against important regulations regardless of what the developer is building, and a developer could apply for an unlimited number of variances. HB 3414 does not require the developer to pass any of the savings they accrue from bypassing important regulations onto house purchasers. There is no requirement that a developer demonstrate that the variance(s) will result in either lower housing costs or increased housing units. They can keep all the profits they accrue from bypassing important regulations to protect our neighborhoods and our environment. HB 3414 will have major negative on the ground impacts. At a time when communities are increasingly aware of the importance of protecting urban natural resources to protect our air and water quality, biodiversity, access to nature, and to advance climate resilience and environmental justice, HB 3414 gives housing developers the ability to circumvent most if not all the urban environmental protections that have been put in place over the past several decades.

Thank you,
Kate