



May 8, 2023

Dear Chair Fahey and Honored Members of the House Rules Committee:

I'm writing to you today on behalf of the City of Tigard to voice our opposition to House Bill 3414, specifically the sections requiring the approval of variances for all needed housing except in limited circumstances.

Over the past decade, Tigard has built a statewide reputation for being a forward-thinking pro-housing community, so I believe it's important that I highlight to you that it is a rare circumstance for our city to go on record as opposed to a bill intended to streamline housing production.

While we understand the sentiment behind this bill—to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers—the bill will have a detrimental impact on our city's goals to build more economically and racially inclusive neighborhoods, served by multimodal transportation networks, through a combination of regulations and incentives.

This bill will effectively remove all siting and design standards for all housing development. A by-right allowance for a variance has the same effect as repealing all regulatory standards. This will unconditionally remove the city's power to grant variances only in instances where developers meet city climate, equity, or connectivity goals.

We believe that with clear and objective standards already in place for all housing, the variance process is the only area left where the city can request tradeoffs like affordable units or carbon-responsible practices in exchange for flexibility. Requiring approval of all variances will remove this important tool.

Further, as written, this bill would apply to all housing applications, including for partitions and subdivisions, negating the city's ability to achieve its goals of creating neighborhoods that are more walkable and equitable.

I urge you to reject the bill or remove the provisions to require approval of all variances.

Best regards,

Heidi Lueb, Mayor  
City of Tigard