

Submitter: Owen Wozniak
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

I've just read the text of HB 3414 and am concerned the bill as drafted is far too broad. I support the bill's goal of accelerating housing production, but I fear it could easily be used to bypass important protections for nature, community well being, sustainability, and so forth.

In particular, Section 2 is overly broad. I see no limits to the types of variances the bill could force jurisdictions to grant housing developers. I think about environmental constraints such as tree codes, wetland areas, floodplains, and similar important zoning overlays. I don't see how a local jurisdiction could say "no" to a developer wanting a variance from such constraints. This is unacceptable.

I am 100% supportive of more housing -- including more density, including in my own neighborhood. But this legislation seems to give carte blanche to developers. It also lacks focus on affordable housing. As I read the bill, a developer could seek all sorts of variances to build luxury homes. And they could seek variances to reduce their construction costs but not pass on savings to buyers, essentially just padding their profit margin.

This bill needs to be significantly more targeted. Otherwise, it essentially explodes an important part of land use planning system with no guarantee it will produce the desired effect.