

May 10, 2023

Re: HB 3414

Dear House Committee on Rules,

I am writing today to strongly oppose HB 3414. I support affordable housing and I support infill but giving developers carte blanche to do whatever they want in this state is a huge mistake.

I live in North Portland near the Killingsworth MAX stop. The amount of development that we are already seeing is jarring. One and two floor homes knocked down to build 7 and 8 story buildings. Many of them overlapping the sidewalks above our heads. Hundreds of trees have been lost and very few replaced. What have we gain? Not affordable housing, rather in the place of an affordable house we've gotten luxury condos and apartments and many, many more out of state license plates. We can't let this happen throughout our state.

We need to get creative and not kowtow to developers. We are acutely aware in this state of the climate crisis, with the intense heat that we have felt in the past few years. It's no secret that keeping a tree canopy not only sequesters carbon, but helps neighborhoods stay cool in heat waves. This law would allow the developers to bypass tree preservation standards. In addition, the law would also let developers bypass regulations to protect wetlands, floodplains, and high value habitats. In a state that values our natural resources and enjoys our outdoor recreation this seems extremely wrongheaded. Additionally, we love our walkable main streets and downtown areas this law would take away the ability of local communities to ensure these places remain walkable and economically thriving commercial cores.

The bill would also take away all appeals processes from the local community. In situations where a variance can be denied, the bill would shift the burden to city staff to write up lengthy justifications for any denial, this could potentially give incentive for city staff to overlook safety concerns when a variance is sought.

There are many ways to support streamlining and incentivizing housing in a preservation and climate friendly manner while not sacrificing our existing resources – both built and natural. The state needs to get creative and stop bending over backwards for developers. It has brought little affordable housing to my North Portland Neighborhood and it will have little impact on affordable housing in the state, but it has the real possibility of making the state less livable and less resilient in the face of climate change.

Please vote no on HB3414.

Sincerely,

Tara Knierim