

Submitter: Ana Gonzalez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

I am writing this testimony in opposition of HB 3414. This bill takes away the rights of the local communities living in these development areas to assess and critique what is being built in their city. As an architectural designer living in NE Portland, I have seen a lot of poorly planned housing developments sprout (and continue to be approved) all around the area even without passing this bill. These large apartment complexes and condos are unused and lacking in affordable options. Complexes along N Williams and Vancouver Avenues that have been built for several years are still advertising with “now leasing” signs, meanwhile another complex is being built on the other side of the street. I am no stranger to the approval process, my firm recently went through a design review hearing where neighbors aired their grievances about our design - this process is not only part of our jobs as civil servants to listen to the public, but also a way to improve our designs and what we build in our cities. Developers often come from out of town looking for quick investment opportunities and then leave the city without a plan for the building’s future. It is irresponsible to give the power to these types of developers and builders looking for any opportunity to make some money. I live in a neighborhood between two main streets where the apartments and condos are being built quickly and poorly. Next door to our 100+ year old house, a developer built two 3-story condos (12 units total) without any consideration of the already limited parking situation or even the site that they had bought. They built their cookie-cutter condos on the lot where we had a shared driveway with the neighboring site. Not only did they never come to assess the site to see if the design was workable in the neighborhood, but they cut our driveway in half because it was split by the property line. As someone who works in the construction industry, I know we are a group of problem solvers and if anyone had bothered to stop by the site and saw that condition they would have at least reconsidered where they were putting the fence. This all to say that this bill is irresponsible and will harm local communities more than you could possibly foresee. Even with the current regulations, we are not doing justice to our communities. Thinking about the future of our city, this bill would not only speed up negative gentrification but also the climate crisis.