



January 26, 2025

Hon. Nathanson, Chair
Hon. Reschke and Walters, Vice-Chairs
House Committee on Revenue
Oregon Legislature
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SUPPORT HB 3190

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Committee Members,

As Oregon's only statewide non-profit historic preservation organization, Restore Oregon works with thousands of people across the state each year to reimagine and transform their communities through the preservation and reuse of historic and cultural places. Our mission is to provide a vibrant and equitable Oregon where historic preservation and reuse are crucial to solving problems like our current housing crisis or our struggling downtowns. By helping our fellow citizens preserve our state's unique built, natural and cultural environments, we help celebrate and promote much of what makes Oregon unique and so special.

We enthusiastically support HB 3190 which reauthorizes a version of Oregon's longtime Special Assessment for Historic Properties program. An earlier version of this program expired last June and this bill will re-enact this financial tool/incentive specifically for commercial property owners.

This bill would bring back a program that helps invest in our state's historic properties and ensure they are renovated and maintained responsibly. It would offer commercial properties a specially assessed value (calculated by the county assessor) for a ten-year benefit term in exchange for making appropriate improvements to the historic property. It would be administered by the Oregon Historic Preservation Office, a division of Oregon Parks and Recreation, who can readily administer this new version as they are still managing the former program's enrolled properties.

Just when our "main streets," commercial corridors, and downtowns across the state need an infusion of support and financial investment, HB 3190 can play an important role in helping invest and revitalize these properties. And, it also aligns with and helps leverage existing programs like the Main Street Revitalization grant fund. And, it would provide a long-term

incentive as the benefit period is over ten years, which is an essential stabilizing benefit for our downtowns.

Additionally, HB 3190 could help spur increased housing production, specifically in the underutilized and vacant upper floors of commercial buildings. This can help many struggling, vacant, or underutilized properties in every community in our state.

Astoria's Merwyn Hotel created 40 units of affordable and work force housing. Salem's Fork Forty project created a food hub *and* reestablished new housing units on the second floor. These are just two projects who enrolled in the former program before it sunset.



Many more commercial properties would benefit once this program is available through HB 3190.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3190 and for taking Restore Oregon's comments into consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Nicole Possert'.

Nicole Possert
Executive Director