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On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3190

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

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

I encourage you to 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 properties.

Oregon is home to a wide variety of historic and cultural places – places that are special, unique and define who and what we are. Many are buildings - valuable assets that can contribute to large and small downtown revitalization efforts and help reduce housing shortages – if they are stabilized, improved and revived.

Present day Salem, where I live, includes the Downtown Historic District, a seven-block area bounded by Chemeketa, High, Ferry and Front streets. Nearly 62 percent of the buildings downtown, 57 in total, contribute to the city's history. Once home to saloons, butcher shops and ballrooms, the area now includes housing, restaurants, small businesses and offices. Bringing back the Special Assessment program will enable even more responsible mixed use development in these historic buildings.

Re-establishing this program will add another important tool to the toolkit for community revitalization. Like the Main Street program, it will give small and large towns a powerful and needed financial incentive for development. Imagine the possibilities for increased use of the underutilized and vacant upper floors of historic commercial buildings.

HB 3190 makes common sense for Oregon.

Submitted by Christine D'Arcy
Salem, Oregon