

Testimony in opposition
HB 3136
2/05/25

Good afternoon. Thank you for considering my words today.

I oppose HB 3136 in the strongest terms due to the consequences it would have for **objective** decision-making in local land use policy and legislation, and Goal 1, the spirit of which is already being eroded at an alarming rate. I recently served as a former Planning Commissioner for a City here in Oregon, but I am speaking as a private citizen, and relaying an opinion based on observations prior to that service, which inform my position.

I have experienced first hand the perils, and effects on local land use decisions, of having appointed officials who indirectly and, sometimes, directly benefit from the decisions they make as part of their work. I understand the train of thought that these professionals in real estate and related lines of work could make an helpful contribution to the land use decisions for a City. However, to set the table for overweighting local Planning Commissions with people in the very businesses who stand to profit from the decisions they make “on behalf of the City” is to potentially place the priorities of those very people above those community members who may have a different perspective on what is best for the community. And, these other community members generally have a perspective which is NOT influenced by future profit.

To remove the specificity of the language prohibiting more than two members being in a real estate related profession is already open to interpretation and allows for ample flexibility in appointment criteria, while preventing an imbalance, at least in theory. Removing it is unnecessary and could result in damaging unintended consequences for Cities across the State.

The final issue which needs to be highlighted with the prospect of opening the door to stacking Planning Commissions with developers and real estate professionals is the amplification of the considerable public angst over the already painful loss of local control over land use decision-making. Public trust in City decisions, including and maybe especially land use decisions, is falling at a precipitous rate. This bill, if passed, would undoubtedly accelerate that trend. For the State to add yet another layer of insult to Goal 1 injury in the form of removing an already subjective guardrail from local appointments and therefore legislation, is unacceptable, and should be summarily killed.

Thank you for your service to our State, and for considering my testimony.

Carolyn Mayers