

Submitter: Ron Campbell
On Behalf Of: The Concord Partnership
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 2138. I am president and board member of The Concord Partnership (TCP), a small non profit organization founded for the purpose of advocating for the preservation and repurposing of Concord School, an iconic landmark that represents the history of Oregon's first school district. As this project is now reaching fruition, our community owes its success to the collective efforts of our community groups, local government agencies and citizenry, together with valuable guidance and support from Restore Oregon and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Involvement with the Concord School project has greatly reinforced my own recognition of the importance of historic preservation to a community's identity, cohesion, livability and pride; and the importance of community involvement in decisions that determine the fate of valuable historic resources. The values to the public of preserving such resources are well known and documented. And yet, the legal framework for protecting significant historic resources remains weak, with little real authority at any government level. Listing a resource on the National Register of Historic Places only means that the public can have a say in whether a listed property is saved for public benefit or destroyed in favor of contrary interests. To remove the requirement for public review of proposed demolition of a listed resource, as in section 22(1)(f) of HB 2138, would cheat the public.

TCP fully agrees with the position of Restore Oregon on HB 2138. We generally support the underlying intent of the Bill to provide for more affordable housing, but only with the removal of section 22(1)(f), which we find to be unnecessary to the Bill's primary purpose and contrary to statewide public interest. Please do the right thing for the public interest, and delete section 22(1)(f) of the Bill before considering its adoption.

Respectfully,
Ron Campbell