

Submitter: Edson Cimionatto
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138
Subject: Opposition to Oregon Section 22(1)(f) and Its Impact on Laurelhurst Historic District

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Oregon's proposed Section 22(1)(f), which poses a significant threat to National Register Historic Districts, including Laurelhurst. This policy not only endangers our city's unique architectural and cultural heritage but also fails to address the pressing issue of affordable housing effectively.

Recent data indicates that the Portland housing market is experiencing a rise in home prices. In January 2025, the median sale price of a home in Portland was \$486,000, reflecting a 3.4% increase compared to the previous year. Additionally, the average home value in Portland stands at \$522,596, marking a 1.2% increase over the past year.

Rental prices have also seen an uptick. The average rent in Portland is \$1,750, 14% lower than the national average. However, a notable number of vacant rental units exist despite these increases. Approximately 41% of apartment rents in Portland range between \$1,501 and \$2,000, with 23% priced over \$2,000. This suggests that many newly constructed apartments remain unoccupied, particularly those at higher price points.

Section 22(1)(f) aims to remove protections from historic districts like Laurelhurst to facilitate new housing developments. However, the current vacancy rates in recently constructed apartments indicate that increasing the housing supply does not translate to greater affordability. Instead, it risks incentivizing developers to build high-end units that may remain vacant, failing to meet the needs of those seeking affordable housing options.

Dismantling historic districts undermines our city's unique character and identity. Neighborhoods like Laurelhurst contribute to Portland's cultural richness and appeal, attracting both residents and visitors. Erasing these areas in the name of development disregards their value to our community.

I urge you to reconsider implementing Section 22(1)(f). A more effective approach would involve utilizing existing vacant properties. Preserving Portland's historic districts while promoting affordable housing is not mutually exclusive. Thoughtful planning and community engagement can lead to solutions that honor our past while securing a sustainable and inclusive future.

While I support investments in public transportation, parking in neighborhoods such as Kerns and Buckman, where I previously lived, has become increasingly difficult. The lack of available parking for residents has led to frequent dents and scratches on my car, creating unnecessary financial burdens. Prioritizing business patrons over residents for parking spaces does not foster community engagement or help maintain clean and safe streets. Instead, it leads to more congestion, frustration, and a diminished sense of belonging among long-term residents.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

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