Submitter: Jenny Mazzella

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2138

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

My name is Jenny Mazzella and I live in Northeast Portland. I am excited to share my support for HB 2138, which will positively affect Oregon's housing shortage by legalizing more infill and middle housing across the state. I love living in Portland, in no small part because of my walkable neighborhood and easy access to all the places I need to go. However, the only reason my husband and I were able to afford our home is due to family financial assistance. Living in a comfortable home, suitable to one's family size, in an area convenient for living and working, should not be restricted to those with financial privilege. We need more housing of all types - in every neighborhood - in order to meet the needs of all Oregonians.

In order for this bill to have its desired impact, it's critical that it retains the language in Section 22(1)(f), which repeals demolition review for houses listed as "contributing" in National Register Historic Districts. This type of historic district designation is overly broad, undemocratic, and takes decision-making away from local jurisdictions. Additionally, demolition review is a lengthy and cumbersome procedure that is often used to effectively block any new housing. (It is important to emphasize that existing land use and development processes already require community engagement.) Preserving this policy at the state level is essentially a way for homeowners in amenity-rich areas to exempt themselves from local zoning and infill-promoting policies. This undermines our ability to build needed housing and preserves exclusionary neighborhoods. HB 2138 in its current form does not eliminate Oregon cities' ability to preserve historical resources through local action, it simply grants cities the flexibility they need to address our ongoing housing crisis.

Thank you.