Submitter: Dave Otte

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB974

My name is Dave Otte and I am a Principal and one of four Owners of Holst Architecture, a COBID certified women-owned and disadvantaged B-Corp located in Portland that has designed thousands of housing units in Oregon since 1992. I also am currently a volunteer member of the Housing Actions Work Group for the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis through the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. I have been practicing architecture in Portland for over 25 years and have worked with multiple Oregon cities on large, complicated housing projects that rarely fit neatly into zoning standards and objective regulations. Discretionary design reviews, when properly used, allow designers more flexibility through collaboration rather than following inflexible limits in order to deliver better, sometimes more housing than what would otherwise result from the zoning code alone. Additionally, in Portland, the development community has worked closely over recent years with City staff to ensure design review is clear and effective through the "Design Overlay Zone Amendments" or DOZA, and these efforts have resulted in a streamlined, predictable process that has been widely praised by the Portland development community.

Design Review is intended to be a tool to create better environments for people. While this tool can be abused by jurisdictions to create exclusionary processes, it should be used by cities to collaboratively create places we all want to live and thrive. Without this tool, we limit flexibility, creativity, and choice - and our built environment will be worse for it. If you choose to exempt housing from design review processes, please allow specific jurisdictions to keep design review if they are able to demonstrate that their process does not result in fewer homes being built in their cities. Please do not throw out the good with the bad when it comes to design review.

Thank you.