

Submitter: Derek Blum

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB974

Senate Committee Members,

I oppose removing Design Review as proposed in the SB974 –1 Amendment “Section 12 (5)” on page 10 and “Section 13 (5)” on page 11. This is another effort to strip protections and design review from local governments solely in the name of building housing at any cost. This is a very short-sighted approach to tackling the issue of housing affordability within the state. Like similar bills and amendments before it, this bill is a blunt instrument that aims to eliminate anything deemed an impediment to construction regardless of the cost and without any hard data identifying it will have a material impact. The bill already reduces the application period, which could create its own hardships given local resources and tightening budgets, but that would at least still allow local governments to determine if their locally passed zoning and design review rules should apply.

Further, there is no end date on this bill, so removal of local design review would stay in effect until another bill is passed. Before usurping the power of local governments to establish their own design review processes, the state should first ensure that these bills, which are paraded out as emergency measures, are actually successful in achieving their ends. The sweeping changes proposed in this bill run the risk of permanently altering the housing landscape based on local rules that are subject to local community input and processes.

Please vote No on this measure, specifically the amendments that have been made.

Sincerely,
Derek Blum
Portland Resident