

Submitter: Christie Mayer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3499
Public Testimony Opposing HB3499

I am writing to express my opposition to HB3499, which would require voter approval for urban renewal plans and substantial amendments.

We elect local officials to make complex decisions on our behalf—particularly those involving city planning, finance, and development. Urban renewal is a nuanced tool; expecting the general electorate to have the time, expertise, and resources to evaluate its intricacies is unrealistic. That's why we place our trust in leaders who dedicate their time to understanding these systems and who are accountable to us through regular elections.

More-so, I'm concerned that the true intent of this bill may be to exploit, rather than empower, the public. Urban renewal is not a broadly understood subject. Most people are focused on their jobs, families, and day-to-day challenges—not municipal finance structures. Requiring a public vote doesn't necessarily create more democratic outcomes—it creates more opportunities for misinformation, confusion, and ultimately, the unintended rejection of projects the public might actually support if they understood the underlying mechanisms.

This bill risks turning urban renewal into a political wedge, where necessary and broadly beneficial investments could be derailed by low-information or misinformation campaigns. In practice, it could mean stalled momentum on critical community improvements.

Urban renewal is an important resource for our cities. Its use should be determined through thoughtful dialog between residents and city leaders, not through slick campaign jargon and 15 second YouTube ads. I urge you to reject HB3499 and continue to support thoughtful, accountable urban development led by the officials we've chosen to represent us. Thank you for your time.