

February 9, 2018

Representative Paul Holvey, Chair
House Committee on Business and Labor
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

On behalf of the City of the City of Phoenix, I am testifying in opposition to HB 4086 as written.

The amendment to ORS 455.148 (3) states "...the governing body of the municipality shall...appoint an employee of the municipality to be the building official for the municipality."

This amendment would force the City of Phoenix, with a population of less than 5,000 and an annual tally of less than 300 building/plumbing/mechanical and electrical permits, to hire our own Building Official. We, like virtually every other city of our size or less, simply cannot support a qualified Building Official with that volume. It's likely that even if we were to consolidate services with a neighboring city we would not have the permit volume to justify or financially support a full-time Building Official.

We currently rely on a private firm for all of our building permit activity outside of taking the permits in at the counter. We are very happy with the services they provide. For smaller jurisdictions like us, we benefit from having access to skilled plans examiners and inspectors without the taxpayer expense of having someone on staff full (or even part) time. I suspect that even if we were to consolidate services with another local jurisdiction, building permit receipts would not be enough to financially support our own Building Official. I also know that underutilized employees tend not to be happy employees, which makes employee hiring and retention difficult.

Most of my personal experience has been with smaller jurisdictions in eastern Oregon. I can tell you that anything we do to make it more difficult for cities, and even some rural counties, to do building permits, the more likely we are to see unpermitted work increase.

The City of Phoenix respectfully urges that HB 4086 be amended to remove restrictions on Building Officials having to be employees of the jurisdiction.

Regards,



Evan MacKenzie
Planning Director
City of Phoenix Planning and Building Department