

To: Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair Rep. and Ron Noble, Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing

From: Anne Nesse, Director of <http://SustainableEconomiesNW.com>



I am testifying on behalf of my group in favor of passage of HB 2001. It is so obvious that we need an increased supply of smaller square footage housing in all the urban areas throughout our State. We are in a state of emergency. And limited supplies of housing help to create unrealistically high prices for rentals and small apartment ownership.

My group is suggesting one inclusion in this Bill. A designated group of builders to help draw up some guidelines for building these units (that keeps them affordable), but assures the best building practices, so that safety, lessened sound transmission between units, and other superior building recommendations (even sustainably designed landscaping) will occur.

My example comes from someone who builds the exact type of units described in this Bill in the Portland area. And by having these set of recommendations within the Bill it assures that all the counties and cities that will be involved in this construction will have the best interests of the consumers involved (renters or owners?).

Fire:

Allow Type 13D fire sprinklers to meet fire sprinkler requirement for all structures within residential zones including four or fewer dwelling units. Specifically, allow these fire sprinkler systems to be flushed by draining the far end of each circuit to a toilet, so that it can be flushed a little bit at a time with each flush. Also, eliminate the requirement for a commercial-grade fire alarm system, as would be required in a high-rise. Focus on life safety, which a Type 13D system will protect.

Elevator:

Allow residential-grade elevators to be used for all structures including four or fewer dwelling units; specifically, do not require commercial elevators in this context. Commercial elevators can easily be \$100,000 to install, plus thousands more each year for ongoing inspection regimes. Residential elevators, despite also being safe enough to move small numbers of people routinely, are closer to \$27 to \$40,000, with much-reduced annual inspection costs. I think that allowing them on structures including fourplexes or with less than four units will allow more

developers and building owners to add elevators to provide adaptability and accessibility for our aging population. Security of access will allow more people to age in place and age in community without worrying that they're always going to be living just one injury away from being able to carry the groceries up the stairs to their home.

Greywater:

Allow for all structures within residential zones including four or fewer dwelling units to install greywater systems under the state's Tier 1 residential SFR/duplex program, which having to meet the stricter and more onerous requirements of the multifamily-focused Tier 2 system. This will allow people to grow sustainable oases in their yards, food forests that will remain lush and green throughout the year, providing food for humans and animals while reducing the urban heat island effect.

Area of openings allowed on walls within a certain distance of other buildings:

This section of the building code is written as if having more than 15% of a building's wall area within 5 feet of a property line has scientifically been proven to kill babies. It's just not the case. I would recommend that, for buildings where a fire sprinkler system of any sort is provided, including of type 13D or 13R, that unlimited openings be allowed on walls within any distance of neighboring properties. A fallback solution would be to require dry stand-head sprinkler heads to cover exterior walls within the fire separation distance that contained more than the threshold number of openings. The issue is that old homes often violate this rule freely, because, you know, humans like having windows because they let in natural light. Forcing people to board up windows because the modern fire code likes to have soccer fields between buildings for fire separation reasons, even when those buildings are protected by fire sprinklers, is obviously needless overkill. There are multiple potential solutions that would be better than the current code.

The following suggestions are simply worth considering discussing with regards to the building codes concerning existing structures being converted from single family to four or less total dwelling units:

Sound Transmission Code:

While certainly nobody wants to hear every noise their upstairs, downstairs, or next door neighbor makes, how much is it worth making people pay for this? It can be very expensive to install a brand new floor above the existing floor in an existing house; this could easily add \$20 per square foot to the rehabilitation cost for such a project. While relationships between construction cost increase and rent

