

My name is Karl Keener and I reside at 3457 NE Davis St, Portland 97232.

Today I write in opposition to HB2001 because of its multi-pronged attempts to inflict upon the people of Oregon oppressive measures in a desperate attempt to address some very deep seated issues.

First of all, this bill purports to offer simple, overnight solutions to an “affordable housing crisis” that has been in the making for decades. The lack of affordable housing is in large part due to the chronic failure of wages in this state to keep up with the cost of housing. You cannot build your way out of that basic problem without significant public subsidies to close the ever growing gap between wages and housing costs.

For those of us living in the Portland metropolitan area we have seen population growth at alarming rates without any meaningful efforts to grow the basic infrastructural needs of such growth. Our roadways are jammed day and night, and public utility services are already increasingly overstressed. Water, sewer, storm drainage and other public services would have to be expanded drastically to accommodate the type of growth apparently envisioned by HB 2001’s housing construction goals. It would be far wiser to first develop long term planning for such infrastructure expansions and making the critical determination of state, county and local agencies are going to acquire the multiple billions of dollars in funding required to accomplish this.

But as elected officials you must also keep in mind the basic rights of the people of this state including those who spent years working and sacrificing in order to be home owners. Homes are for the majority of people their single greatest personal asset and whose future depend in large part upon the financial security of the investments they have made in their homes. The cities and counties where they live established zoning restrictions which are covenants to the people who live there that those restrictions would protect the sanctity of their homes. HB 2001 would compel all cities with populations over 15,000 to breach those covenants without any right of redress on the part of the home owners damaged by this public taking.

The state of Oregon is far less qualified than individual cities and counties to determine their capacity to sustain increased residential density. Only the local jurisdictions know what their capacity is to fund major expenditures on infrastructure expansion and to physically accommodate such expansion.

The potential unintended consequences of SB 2001 could very well be devastating to the cities and counties upon which this legislation would be imposed.

I therefore urge you to oppose this ill conceived piece of legislation.

Respectfully,

Karl Keener