

Sent To House Members via mail merge

February 22, 2023

Representative xxxxxx
Washington State Legislature
Olympia, WA 980504

Re: Vote No - Missing middle housing legislation, HB 1110 and SB 5190

Dear Representative xxxx

On behalf of a coalition of concerned eastside residents, I am writing to encourage you to vote no on House Bill 1110 and to send the Bill back to committee requesting several key amendments. While we support the goals of this Bill and the work of the Legislature, in its current state the Bill is an unproven, irreversible and high-impact experiment. There is no data which supports the premise that it will maternally expand middle and affordable housing or home ownership. The following is a summary of the key unaddressed issues.

1. This Bill needs to recognize land use code amendments and planning at the local level. If adopted, Section 5 of the Bill should exempt cities who have implemented sustainably similar plans within 12-months of the effective date of the Bill.
2. There is an unknown impact to infrastructure including sewer, water and storm water capacity and the respective costs to taxpayers. These costs must be paid by the developers, not taxpayers.
3. The Bill will increase competition for street parking and introduce traffic and pedestrian safety risks. In many neighborhoods parking restrictions exist due to traffic restrictions, emergency vehicles access and often do not have continuous sidewalks or street lighting to transit stops. Sidewalk improvements and lighting must be required to allow residents of all ages and mobility levels access to transit and reduce the risk of pedestrian safety issues. Such improvements should be borne by the developer.
4. If approved the the Bill should restrict and prevent short-term rentals, to help prevent the unintended loss of house stock as experienced in other cities.
5. The inclusion of “community amenity” is unmanageable and the added density will diminish the the sense of community and neighborhood character. It ignores the impact to infrastructure in many neighborhoods which may not have access to transit. Second the inclusion will disburse growth to neighborhoods with limited sanitary sewer, water and storm water infrastructure some of which may be on septic systems.
6. If enacted the Bill should apply to all neighborhoods equitably and not be limited to neighborhoods or home owner associations who may have adopted CC&R which might prohibit the adoption of this Bill. Providing these communities an exemption would unfairly place an unequitable burden on remaining parts of the city which may not have such restrictions. Additionally, providing such exemptions would disproportionately add to the infrastructure burden of other areas within a city order to meet the goals of the plan.

7. Further fiscal analysis is required as acknowledged by the staff at the Feb 21 Appropriations Committee meeting. Many of the costs have not been determined and do not reflect the financial burden this Bill will impose on local jurisdictions and will have an innumerable impact on cities. These costs should be borne by the for-profit developers and not taxpayers.

In summary this Bill is a “one-way” door that has far reaching implications. Please vote no to protect our neighborhood and support the proposed revisions outlined. Doing so will find the balance of meeting the goals of increasing middle housings and respects the planning efforts of our Cities who know best how to address the housing, traffic and public safety issues. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to address these deficiencies and draft a equitable, cost effective and manageable Bill.

Respectfully,

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