



City of Florence

250 Hwy 101, Florence, OR 97439

www.ci.florence.or.us

August 6, 2020

Oregon Building Codes Division

Attention: DCBS Administrator, Rules Advisory Committee Members

C/O Alana Cox,

RE: Testimony from the City of Florence

As a member of the Building Codes Division Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC), I have reviewed the proposed administrative rules set for discussion at the August 7th, 2020 RAC meeting and I find the proposal disappointing.

The City of Florence has been using a third-party inspection service provider off and on for over 30 years. We contract out third party because it makes financial sense to do so with no additional overhead or benefit costs for a Building Official (BO) and an inspector. Florence employed an on-staff Building Official who also served as an inspector from 2005 through 2012, during the construction boom. So, the city is familiar with the financial challenges in-house service brings during the low construction years.

We have successfully used these services to meet the needs of the community to timely respond to building applications and provide excellent inspection services. The City of Florence is disappointed that other options that were expressed by multiple municipalities were not developed and this is the policy the state is choosing for our harder to serve community. Such as, on June 18th, the municipal representatives on the RAC submitted a letter to this committee with possible solutions to the issue including re-visiting language that was proposed in SB 1047 from the last full legislative session in 2019. Options were given from the 2019 SB 1047 that not only would have solved the legal issues but added to the successes, options, and oversite of the current system in use since 1977.

We have been involved in this discussion since early 2018 when the poorly communicated emergency rules were put into place and then revoked. The alternatives have not been found to be workable for our community. For example, entering into an agreement with other local governments to share a building official and building inspectors or hire one of the very high in demand individuals to perform those services are not reasonable solutions. We need a model that can scale, expand, and contract based on the variable volume. No matter what volume of work we have on hand, we need to legally meet the inspection and permit issue timelines. We have been able to do that without exception for decades using the third-party model.

Public Works
989 Spruce St.
(541) 997-4106

**City Manager/
City Recorder**
(541) 997-3437

**Community Development:
Planning & Building**
(541) 997-8237

**Finance/
Utility Billing**
(541) 997-3436

Justice Center
900 Greenwood St.
(541) 997-3515

Florence Events Center
715 Quince St.
(541) 997-1994



We are hopeful that the BCD will be open to hearing how business is actually occurring in our City and not assume that the few infractions are a reflection of the majority. We encourage BCD to explore other ways to hold violators accountable instead of creating burdensome rules for all. These have been our concerns for the last two years, and are only now magnified with the COVID-19 pandemic. I appreciate your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "ER Reynolds".

Erin Reynolds, City Manager