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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Aug. 19, 2015**

### **Portland Residents Launch Campaign Against Destructive Referendum**

**PORTLAND** – A group of concerned Portland residents today launched a campaign to defeat a far-reaching, poorly written and dangerous municipal referendum that was initiated by a few self-interested residents of Munjoy Hill in an effort to block the redevelopment of the historic Portland Co. site.

“In an effort to stop one project, the proponents of the referendum are willing to put at risk every project in the city. The smallest things, like someone adding a flagpole, a new porch on their house or new landscaping on their property, can be challenged,” said Jess Knox, co-chairperson of Portland’s Future PAC. “This ordinance will have unintended consequences that will hurt every neighborhood in Portland.”

The ordinance, Question 2 on the Portland ballot on Nov. 3, would allow one “affected property” owner or 20 people willing to sign a petition to force even minor changes, such as a new air conditioning system or outdoor lighting, to be considered by a new city task force. The task force could block these improvements if its members decide they could impact someone’s view.

“This proposed ordinance has unintended consequences, and voters should reject it,” said Lisa Whited, co-chairperson of Portland’s Future. “The ordinance transparently targets a great redevelopment project that would add much needed housing in the city, greatly increase access to the waterfront for everyone and preserve the important historic buildings of the Portland Co. But the ordinance goes much further than that, allowing any single person or small group of people to use unnecessary red tape to block or delay almost any project. It’s not hard to foresee this ordinance being used to fight other thoughtful projects, including affordable and workforce housing.”

Other members of Portland’s Future include George Campbell, who will serve as treasurer. Campbell chaired the Eastern Prom Master Plan Committee that produced the 2004 Eastern Waterfront Master Plan, which won the Merit Award for Planning from the Boston Society of Landscape Architects.

“Through the work of countless volunteers and over many years, Portland has developed a strong regulatory environment to make sure our city grows in a smart, sustainable way,” Campbell said. “The proposed ordinance will undo that good work. Voters should reject this overreach.”

The announcement of the formation of Portland's Future was held on the Bayside Trail near new development in the Bayside neighborhood of the city. If in place at the time, the ordinance could have been used to stall or stop the new offices, apartments and stores in the area.

In addition, the ordinance could have been used to block or delay new industry along Portland's waterfront, including the Eimskip facility, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and the Portland Fish Exchange.

"If this ordinance had been in place, any one of these critical pieces to Portland's working waterfront could have come under attack using the premise that they would impact the view of the Fore River or Portland's harbor," Knox said. "If we want to protect Portland's working waterfront, we can't enact ordinances that keep people and jobs away from it."

Paul Stevens, principal, architect and marketing director at SMRT, and a member of the board of the Portland Society for Architecture, also spoke at the event, highlighting the destructive nature of the ordinance and the impact it would have on thoughtful planning in the city.

Portland's Future will build a strong grassroots campaign to inform voters about the dangers posed by the referendum and urge them to vote "no."

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