

KHANH PHAM
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 23



March 3, 2026

To my Colleagues and the Public,

I voted no on HB 4102.

I want to start by saying that I do see value in expedited permitting under the right conditions. In housing especially, I share the concern that delay, uncertainty, and backlog can stall projects that deliver real public benefit.

But those systems must be built carefully, with clear guardrails, and with a full understanding of potential unintended consequences.

HB 4102 authorizes third-party contractors to participate in DEQ permitting, including contractors funded by the regulated entities themselves. While general procurement standards were referenced, I did not see sufficiently explicit statutory safeguards to address conflicts of interest or the appearance of influence. As the League of Women Voters noted in testimony, there is significant concern about outsourcing this technical and public health–critical work, particularly if paid by the businesses being regulated.

We also heard from environmental justice and labor partners that expedited pathways should explicitly incorporate public interest criteria, including compliance history and workforce standards. That is a reasonable and measured position. If we are offering companies speed and certainty, we should also ensure accountability, transparency, and tangible benefit to Oregon communities.

This is particularly important when large industrial facilities—such as data centers—can have real impacts on water quality, air quality, and frontline communities. Independent, credible oversight is not a formality; it is essential to public trust.

I believe expedited permitting may be appropriate in some cases. But those conversations must be deliberate and precise, with statutory clarity around conflicts of interest and public benefit, so we do not inadvertently erode confidence in our regulatory system.

For those reasons, and because I believe more refinement is needed, I voted no. I remain committed to working toward a permitting framework that balances efficiency with integrity and ensures that Oregon’s public interest is fully protected.

Sincerely,

Khanh Pham

State Senator