

Submitter: Ryan Haynes

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure: HB2659

The Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities bill is just another in a long set of rulemaking that does little more than make housing more expensive.

Oregon remains in the midst of a housing crisis. The rules proposed in CFEC will make housing development - particularly affordable housing development - much more difficult throughout the state. These rules, much like the rules surrounding our failed UGB policy, will exacerbate income inequality and have a disparate impact on communities of color. Efforts to increase housing density on available land remain laudable, but Oregonians deserve choices in their housing decisions. Not every family wishes to raise their children in a densely-populated urban core, and there are valid concerns about the impact that an emphasis on higher-density development has on crime rates, mental health, displacement, and gentrification. The infill development this encourages involves a more complex construction process, additional regulatory hurdles, and significant environmental cleanup before housing can be built on sites. The environmental review process required to maintain affordability through the use of housing vouchers is incredibly time consuming. All of this significantly adds to the cost of development, which makes the housing that is ultimately built there less affordable.

This bill will artificially constrain the supply of housing and create scarcity. The limited supply of available housing will become more expensive. This bill will encourage the development of more expensive housing in order to justify the higher costs. When builders are incentivized to build higher-end housing in order to make a profit, the production of affordable and diverse housing options suffers. Less development of housing available for all types of development prevents overall housing supply from keeping up with increased demand for affordable housing.

As land and housing prices rise because of the restrictions created through this bill, lower-income residents will be priced-out of their neighborhoods when wealthier families eventually move in. This forces lower-income households, often from communities of color, to seek more affordable housing elsewhere. This increases their commuting costs and reduces their access to urban amenities or services they may desire. Social cohesion suffers. Ironically, these sorts of laws have actually led to greater amounts of sprawl and traffic problems in the state because low-income residents have been forced to flee to cheaper communities to live and then commute into town for employment. This displacement may also reduce access to employment opportunities, public transportation, healthcare, education, and other essential

services. Unequal access to these resources and opportunities reduces upward mobility.

City planners in this county are already trying to use the CFEC regulations to prohibit the development of needed affordable housing by making it too expensive to build. The laws of supply and demand are stifled. HB 2659 is not perfect, but neither is our system of land-use laws. Only by making it easier for developers to add housing units to communities will home prices begin to become affordable to families in the workforce of those communities. HB 2659 will not increase sprawl or turn the community into a barren moonscape as its detractors will argue. Rather, it will make it possible for homes to be built and people to live in the communities where they work. We should all be so lucky to have that opportunity.