

Submitter: Elisabeth Blizzard
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3928

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3928. I strongly oppose this bill.

During the 47 years that I've lived in unincorporated Washington County, I have seen many changes to our rural communities. One of the most distressing change has been the loss of valuable resource lands to encroaching development. These changes are based on the premise that we continue to need more land, more housing, more roads, more tax revenue, a bigger economy. This premise includes the thinking that even if we have to sacrifice farms, forests, and significant natural resources along the way, it's unfortunate, but that's just the price we pay for "progress".

It has been encouraging to hear some elected officials understand the need to address climate change and promote a more sustainable future. But when it comes to taking action to change our destructive current trajectory, it is distressing to see policies that focus on short term solutions to chronic problems. This has to change. Defeating HB 3928 is a good place to start.

HB 3928 would promote sprawling development outside the Urban Growth Boundary, allowing new residences in locations far from roads, schools, existing infrastructure, and services – distances that require more driving, more traffic congestion, as well as increased costs for residents.

HB 3928 would do nothing to ease our urgent need for more lower income and middle housing; only the well-to-do would be able to afford to live in new sprawling development.

HB 3928 would promote the kind of sprawling development that is more costly not only for residents but for local jurisdictions that must provide and maintain new roads, utilities, schools, and public and emergency services.

HB 3928 would also devastate rural communities and local economies. As working lands disappear, so do critical businesses that support our vital agricultural and timber sectors. The result is hollowed-out small towns and rural communities, a backbone of Oregon's character and culture. We have already seen this happen in Washington County; we cannot afford to make it worse.

Oregon needs better solutions than short-term fixes that work against our long term needs. I urge you to vote against HB 3928.

Sincerely,
Meeky (Elisabeth) Blizzard