

To our Honorable State Senators and Representatives,

We hope this letter finds you well while you navigate through the 2024 short session. Recognizing the multitude of requests that come your way, we appreciate your dedication to addressing the diverse needs of our state.

We want to draw your attention to a critical concern for all cities in Oregon, particularly those considering Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expansions. We appreciate the work that you are doing to focus on the housing and economic development, but we need your help to address lingering challenges.

Some cities across Oregon have exhausted their housing land supply and community amenities, and they need to rebalance their tax base to help their communities thrive.

The economic opportunities for cities like Gresham, Corvallis, and Hillsboro are significant. ***However, other cities such as North Plains, Sisters, and King City face challenges as external groups influence local decisions through referendums and recalls, jeopardizing planned growth for their cities and for the State of Oregon, while upsetting the land-use processes along the way.***

The ambiguity surrounding UGB applications subject to referendums leaves many cities vulnerable to external influences. ***We urge you to advocate for codifying that the state-required UGB application procedures are not subject to being referred to voters by referendum petition, which would provide clarity and fairness in the urban planning process statewide.***

In 2016, voter-approved annexations were eliminated, but the omission of clarity on state-required land use application steps subjects Oregon cities UGB's to potential ballot referrals, appeals, and costly litigation. Without a fix, we can expect ballot referrals as a matter of course for Oregon cities plus existing state-level process appeals and potential costly litigation. ***We are seeking clarification, not new policy, on the land use appeals process.***

Your support for Oregon communities has been invaluable, and we seek your continued advocacy to ensure our concerns are not overshadowed. All Oregon cities want to be a part of the housing and economic solutions in Oregon. We need leadership to ask more questions to better understand what cities need and deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Teri Lenahan, Mayor of North Plains
Tami Kaufman, Mayor of Gold Beach
Stephanie Jones, Mayor of Banks
Meadow Martell, Mayor of Cave Junction
Henry Balensifer, Mayor of Warrenton
Tom Vialpando, Mayor of Vale
Jef Dalin, Mayor of Cornelius
Scott Cowan, Mayor of Millersburg

Jaimie Fender, Mayor of King City
Joe Buck, Mayor of Lake Oswego
Brian Hobson, Mayor of Canby
Joe Backus, Mayor of Scappoose
Tim Rosener, Mayor of Sherwood
Frank Bubenik, Mayor of Tualatin
Malynda Wenzl, Mayor of Forest Grove
Melanie Kebler, Mayor of Bend