

To the Members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 4118 and to the -1 amendment to that bill. HB 4118, as written, would not only circumvent existing legal processes for amending UGBs, but would also overturn a 50-year history of relying on a factual showing of need for any new additions to urban land supplies in Oregon. Certainly there is a need for new housing, and for new housing attuned to the financial capacity and needs of working households. However, simply expanding UGBs as proposed by HB 4118 overlooks several key issues, including the availability of needed infrastructure, the important steps taken by the State and a number of its major cities to create new opportunities for infill and redevelopment close to jobs and where no new infrastructure is needed, and the implicit assumption that households most in need of affordable housing will find it easy to cope with the extraordinary transportation costs associated with new development on the fringe. In short, HB 4118 throws out the massive investments we've made in planning and infrastructure to favor piecemeal sprawl at the edge of UGBs and at increasing public expense.

However, the -1 amendment takes a laudable goal—increasing the housing supply—and makes it worse by creating a task force to simply throw out all of the planning done by the public in favor of the interests of urban fringe landowners, developers, and their representatives. By focusing on land for housing, industrial and commercial use, and infrastructure, the task force would be empowered to essentially nullify the bulk of what constitutes local land use plans. The membership of the taskforce leaves out large numbers of interested people, particularly those most affected by the widespread disruption of local plans and UGBs, and those that have worked for decades to create and steward a viable future for their and other communities. The taskforce is not instructed to take into account policy objectives for climate, natural resource protection, and providing citizens with a diversity of housing and mobility choices long sought by the State of Oregon and its communities.

With 31 members, such a task force is likely to never be workable, or to be able to actually focus on one of the many issues that it's charged with addressing, much less the other policy issues that it's currently ignoring. There is no specific connections with other citizen-led bodies throughout Oregon state government already charged with addressing these and other issues, including LCDC, OTC, OGWC, OHC, and others. Further, the membership for this commission excludes Oregon's largest jurisdiction, home to over 15% of the State's population, and uses unnecessarily veiled descriptions to cherrypick others. All of this suggests that this task force, if created, will simply provide a new megaphone for a narrow and already empowered set of interests.

Certainly as we approach the 50th anniversary for Senate Bill 100 it's worth asking whether our land use planning system is getting us what we want and need. Sadly this proposal lurks in the shadows of real and important questions, and doesn't provide the opportunity for real, thoughtful reflection and assessment that might prove to be helpful. Harking back to Tom McCall's address to the 1973 Legislature, both HB 4118 and its -1 amendments threaten to make a mockery of Oregon's reputation for thoughtful, fact-based, and forward-looking

planning. We, and you, can and must do much better. Please do not advance this bill or its amendment any further. If something in our land use planning system needs study, please ask LCDC, the panel already asked to oversee the system and its value to Oregon, to do so.

Sincerely,

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