



February 11, 2022

House Committee on Housing
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony on HB 4118 (Urban Growth Boundary Expansion Bill)

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Campos and Morgan & Members of the House Committee on Housing:

Thrive Hood River (formerly Hood River Valley Residents Committee) is one of Oregon's oldest local land-use advocacy groups. Since 1977 our mission has been to protect farms, forests, special wild places, and the livability of urban and rural communities in Hood River County. We are writing to express **our opposition to HB 4118**, which bypasses land-use laws to expand urban growth boundaries.

The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is the cornerstone of Oregon's land-use planning system. Every city in Oregon has undergone years of public planning processes to determine these boundaries in hopes that we would build homes and workforce housing—critical as they are—around essential amenities that make cities livable and affordable while safeguarding our natural resources and food-producing lands from sprawl. Allowing private landowners to drive UGB expansions according to a broadly-defined set of needs would circumvent our first Statewide Land Use Planning Goal: citizen involvement.

On a practical level, this bill does not address the logistical implications of a UGB expansion, which would require expanding city infrastructure and utilities to accommodate these expansions. It speaks of a “commitment” but does not describe any funding mechanism, leaving it to taxpayers to fund sprawling, impromptu developments outside the UGB and making future investments in essential amenities like public transportation less affordable.

Finally, the language in the -1 amendment still implicitly pits housing and development against food-producing farmland and UGBs, instead of focusing on the key policy-fronts: missing middle-housing and higher-density development within UGBs.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicolas Salter".

Nicolas Salter
Executive Director