

Submitter: Michael James

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB70

Restrictions on developable land in Oregon do little more than perpetuate inequality, quash the ability for minorities to build financial equity, and add to the housing crisis that dominates discussion throughout the state.

Throughout much of Oregon, thousands of acres of exclusive farm use or EFU land has not had crops planted on it or seen livestock set foot on it in decades. Yet, this land cannot be converted to use for housing, even where it directly abuts already developed land.

Urban growth boundaries and restrictions on EFU development keep the wealthy wealthy and make housing less affordable for lower-income groups. These restrictions have reduced the number of homes that are built, as evidenced by the fact that since SB100 was enacted in 1973, production of housing has never again reached the number of units delivered since the year prior to enactment, despite rapid increases in the rate of population growth statewide. We are building less housing in Oregon each year than we were building in 1972. Because of the laws of supply and demand, an increasingly large percentage of the state population is spending an increasingly burdensome amount of their take-home pay on housing as the supply is being artificially kept below demand.

This legislature should be encouraging the development of more housing anywhere in the state it can be built. It should be dismantling systems of oppression such as those created by SB 100. It should be breaking down barriers to housing affordability.

SB 70 is a small step in that direction, and I wholeheartedly support its passage.