



POLK COUNTY

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AUSTIN MCGUIGAN
Director

March 26, 2025

Honorable Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson,
and members of the House Committee
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Strong Support for HB 2647-3 – Monmouth UGB Land Exchange

Dear Legislative Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for **HB 2647-3**, which provides a much-needed solution to Monmouth's critical housing shortage by facilitating a **UGB land exchange** that will enable responsible residential development while preserving environmentally sensitive land.

Monmouth, with a population of approximately 11,000, faces a severe shortage of buildable residential land, with fewer than 10 serviceable lots currently available. The existing UGB includes undevelopable areas due to flood hazards, infrastructure limitations, and unwilling landowners, exacerbating the city's housing crisis. Monmouth is currently ranked as the **8th most rent-burdened city in Oregon**, with residents struggling to find affordable housing.

The traditional UGB adjustment process is costly and time-consuming, often taking years and requiring significant financial resources. Additionally, the "Alternative UGB Land Exchange" process authorized by SB 1537 (2024), is not applicable to Monmouth, leaving the city without immediate viable expansion options.

HB 2647-3 offers a practical and balanced solution by:

- **Removing 90 acres** of environmentally sensitive land (flood zones, wetlands) that are **unsuitable for development**.
- **Adding 75 acres** of land that is **free from environmental constraints**, has a **cooperative landowner**, and has **existing infrastructure** to support housing development.

This legislation directly benefits the public by:

- **Increasing housing supply** with **75 acres designated for middle housing** to accommodate the community's needs.
- **Reducing construction costs** by providing **ready-to-develop land**.
- **Preserving wetlands, flood zones, and wildlife corridors**, ensuring responsible land use and environmental protection.

HB 2647-3 presents a **thoughtful and effective approach** to addressing Monmouth's **urgent housing crisis** while prioritizing environmental sustainability. I urge you to **support this legislation** and advocate for its swift passage to help Monmouth meet its housing needs and promote responsible growth.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to our community. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Austin McGuigan, Director
Polk County Community Development