

Submitter: Dean Moberg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4026

19 February 2024

Chair Fahey and members of the Oregon House Committee on Rules:

I write in dismay over the -1 Amendment to HB 4026, Relating to Elections. The original bill was a simple and laudable proposal to require the Secretary of State to study voter access. In this time of low voter turnout and the tremendous need for more citizen engagement, the original bill was a step in the right direction.

However, the -1 Amendment turns this effort at improving the democratic process upside down by denying citizens the right to petition local government via referendum regarding land use decisions. Furthermore, the Amendment would make this rule retroactive to January 1, 2023.

As you may know, in 2023 many residents of the city of North Plains signed a petition requesting a ballot measure (now Washington County Measure 34-327) to allow them to voice support or opposition to a proposed expansion of the city's urban growth boundary. The -1 Amendment to HB 4026 would sadly deny those citizens of North Plains, and citizens of other Oregon cities, a democratic say in their future.

Moreover, I believe that the Washington County Planning Commission and the Washington County Commissioners have decided to await the outcome of Measure 34-327 before they make decisions regarding the proposed North Plains expansion. The -1 Amendment would deny those local leaders definitive information about the sentiments of North Plains residents.

The -1 Amendment to HB 4026 is just plain wrong. Rather than increasing participation in the democratic process, the Amendment appears to be a callous attempt to deny citizens the right to use the referendum process. I urge you to oppose the -1 Amendment.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and thank you for your service to Oregon.

Dean Moberg
Resident, Unincorporated Washington County
Director, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District
Member, Cedar Mill Farmers Market Board
(comments submitted here are on my behalf alone and not on behalf of any board or

organization for which I serve)