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February 10, 2025

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2316 – Oppose

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2316.

Central Oregon LandWatch is a land use and conservation advocacy organization that has proudly protected Central Oregon's forests, high deserts, rivers, wildlife, and vibrant communities for more than 35 years. The membership of Central Oregon LandWatch consists of farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, hunters, fishers, housing advocates, and community leaders. Our members share the belief that Oregon's land use system is fundamental to what makes this state such a special place to live. In that spirit, ***LandWatch strongly opposes HB 2316.***

HB 2316 would allow public lands both adjacent to and within UGBs to be developed solely with single-unit dwellings under a designation called "home start lands". These lands would be exempted from all Oregon land use laws and statewide planning goals.

Our primary concern with HB 2316 is the negative impacts it will have on rural land in Central Oregon. The bill specifically targets land owned by the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Oregon Forestry Department. Many of the properties on which this bill would allow development are protected for farm use under Goal 3 of the statewide land use planning system, or protected for forest use under Goal 4. These Goals ensure that our state's limited supply of farm and forest lands are maintained for those uses. Other lands carry with them protections under Goal 5, which aims to conserve natural resources, wildlife habitat, scenic and historic areas, open space, and cultural resources. Allowing dense residential development on these lands, affordable or otherwise, brings with it a host of problems. Haphazard residential sprawl in rural areas increases the likelihood of wildfire danger, harms working farms and forests, threatens groundwater supplies, and degrades vital wildlife habitat.

While HB 2316's impact on rural lands in Oregon would be devastating, the changes it proposes will be equally harmful in urban areas. Again, HB 2316 would permit the suspension of all land use laws and the statewide planning goals on thousands of acres of state-owned land. These laws protect community members in countless ways, from ensuring that our roads support our



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transportation needs, to keeping residential development separated from harmful industrial uses. And while housing production for people with middle and lower incomes should be directed inside cities and towns, the Complete Communities that Oregonians need should include a mix of housing types, with nature nearby, and ready access to our schools, stores, and other services.

HB 2316 expressly disallows the creation of Complete Communities, by only permitting the production of single-dwelling units and prohibiting the creation of planned unit developments (PUD). There are smarter, safer, and more affordable ways to build housing. Indeed, better moves, such as providing funding for housing-related infrastructure within cities, are already underway and will move infill development along at a faster pace. These efforts have made big strides already, but need more time to increase Oregon's supply of affordable housing.

HB 2316 is antithetical to Goal 1 of Oregon's Statewide Land Use system. Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 1 ("Citizen Involvement") prioritizes and encourages public participation in land use planning. From the broadest comprehensive plan amendment to the narrowest quasi-judicial application, Goal 1 has guaranteed that communities may give their input on land use decisions. By suspending all land use laws, including Goal 1, HB 2316 would silence the community's voice as to how thousands of acres of public land are used. Instead, lands would be unilaterally designated for single-dwelling rural residential sprawl by the Department of Administrative Services. Urgent production of affordable housing is an admirable goal, and one that LandWatch supports, but not at the expense of sacrificing all other land use protections, including Goal 1.

For the reasons above, Central Oregon LandWatch urges the Committee to reject HB 2316.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Robin Hayakawa
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Central Oregon LandWatch



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