

Marion County Democrats Legislative Committee

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**SB 1537 - Land Use and Housing – Support with removal of Urban Growth Boundary Provisions**

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson and members of the committee

The Marion County Democrats have a legislative committee to look at issues facing all Oregonians.

We are especially concerned about the expansion of the urban growth boundary provisions in SB 1537. Marion County provides some of the richest farmland in the state. The US Department of Agriculture estimates the value of agriculture in Marion County alone in 2017 was \$701 million. The combined value of agricultural crops sold in the 9 Willamette Valley counties was \$2.3 billion in the same period. (Data from USDA most current reports submitted)

We strongly object to the expansion of the urban growth boundaries. Once you put pavement and concrete on farmland you can no longer farm. We remind you that concrete makes for a very difficult chew.

Additionally, some of the issues regarding housing is not the absence of housing it is the cost of that housing. As of today, apartments.com lists just under 800 rentals in Salem and 125 in Keizer. That does not include the rentals in the large area in the UGB urbanized but not within the city limits of Salem or Keizer.

Sprawl means additional travel, likely by car, to reach services, jobs, medical appointments. For those on minimum wage the added travel costs strain already strained budgets.

As SB 100 of 1973 turns 51 years old we are faced with the specter of unnecessary UGB expansion.

We strongly urge you to amend the bill so that Oregon can retain our world famous and vital farmland.

Marcia Kelley

Chair, MCDCC Legislative Committee