

Opposition to SB1537

We oppose any changes to the Urban Growth Boundaries and are asking you to please stand against housing bill SB 1537 as it is currently written. **Changing the urban growth boundaries should not be part of this bill. It is not necessary!**

We must protect the limited farmland we still have available to us. Locally grown food is becoming more important to Oregonians and once gone farmland can not be replaced. Please do not let this happen to Oregon's farmland.

Food prices, especially for fresh produce, may become a bigger threat to lower and middle income families than housing costs. Consider the food insecurity so many face now and consider if paving over farmland makes sense in todays world when climate change will affect the ability to produce food. Plus the costs of shipping food from distant locations will only increase. The US already has a topsoil crisis with Oregon being one of the few state's with remaining high quality top soil. (Per Peter Zeihan, global strategist and author). Other sources verify this. Lack of high quality farmland is the real crisis and paving it over is unconscionable. And, as climate change continues, affordable food will become a bigger issue than it is currently.

We believe this bill as written is a blatant give away to special interests that do not have the best interests of Oregonians as their goal, but rather personal gain and profit.

Many cities, especially Portland have plenty of options for building housing within their boundaries. This should happen first and any expansion of an UGB should be done within the framework of the existing laws.

One needs only to drive north to the Seattle area to witness the result of poor land use planning. The Kent Valley, once some of the best farmland in western Washington, is now almost completely paved over. This is what happens when strict land use policies are not in place. Land use planning has since been implemented in the area, but not before acres of rich farmland was turned into pavement. And, as you are aware, housing in the Seattle area is more expensive than the Portland area. In fact, the Portland area is the least expensive of the major West coast cities. Each of the other west coast cities have allowed growth to swallow surrounding farm land, but the cost of housing is higher than Portland. So they have paved over irreplaceable farm land and have not solved their housing problems.

We can support more housing, but not at the expense of farms. We need to be leaders for the country in the fight to preserve farms and the environment! This is the Oregon way. Let's not change it and let's **leave the Urban Growth Boundaries alone.**

Respectfully submitted,
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