

Submitter: Diane Chavez

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

I am a Salem homeowner in support of the infrastructure funding and climate-smart housing incentives of SB 1537, and with STRONG OPPOSITION to the provision that allows large urban growth boundary (UGB) expansions without regard for Oregon's land use laws. Here's why:

- The land use program has served to protect Oregon farms and forest. Living soils are key to a livable future.
- Investing in existing lands within the UGB is the most effective step the state can take now to quickly make large parcels "shovel-ready" for producing housing. In Salem projects, such as South Block, have converted outdated buildings into needed living spaces.
- Lands inside current UGBs should not have to compete with UGB expansions for scarce infrastructure dollars. For example, the street where I live, 19th and Chemeketa, is in need of a new sewer.
- Spending limited infrastructure dollars goes further and faster inside UGBs to produce more houses than spending those dollars in a UGB expansion. Residential lands already inside UGBs are often closer to existing infrastructure or have some infrastructure in place, but need just a bit more. This means less cost and less time to get more homes on the ground than through a UGB expansion.
- Building at the edge puts more people farther away from the services, stores, and jobs they need. That requires more driving, which makes living at the edge much less affordable.
- Building at the edge exacerbates inequality and racial and economic injustice. Housing policies should open up existing neighborhoods. It is inequity not the UGB that drives homelessness. Expanding the UGB will not solve homelessness.
- More driving means more greenhouse gas emissions, more roads and pavements, heat islands, and stormwater runoff that ends up in rivers and streams. It paves over carbon-sequestering farmlands and natural areas.

Please, amend SB 1537 to remove the provision that bypasses land use laws to allow large UGB expansions. It's a distraction from real solutions to our housing crisis.

Thank you