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Senate Housing & Development Committee
Via: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2024R1/Testimony/SHDEV/SB/1537/0000-00-00-00-00?area=Measures>

February 8, 2024
RE: SB 1537

Members of the Committee:

This letter is to provide input regarding SB 1537, Governor Kotek's far reaching housing bill.

I support efforts to provide affordable housing. The current shortage of affordable housing shows that relying only on the free marketplace to create such housing does not work. Governmental incentives and requirements appear to be necessary.

I also support the existing state wide land use goals. Adherence to those goals is what has prevented Oregon from becoming a sprawl filled duplicate of other areas.

However, SB 1537 contains numerous complex concepts. While the intent of the bill is good, complex concepts that have not been thoroughly vetted by all stakeholders can lead to unforeseen results and problems. I strongly question whether the chaotic environment of a short session is the proper place to adopt such complex legislation.

In particular, sections 48 - 60, "One time site additions to Urban Growth Boundaries" are concerning. Those sections amount to a "Super Siting" authority for Urban Growth Boundary expansions with many short cuts to the existing process.

My concern is two fold:

1. With over 10,000 acres of undeveloped land currently available within existing UGBs, and an existing process underway to infill this land, the need for such expansions seems questionable.
2. Expanding a UGB is the land use process that has the single greatest impact of any land use process. It opens the gates. While not a rapid thing, the existing process allows for a thorough analysis of potential impacts.

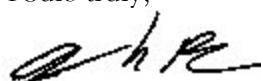
Shortcutting that process will inevitably lead to overlooked issues and impacts.

The few days this issue was discussed at the end of the 2023 session and the compressed process of a short session are simply not sufficient to thoroughly analyze such a complex issue. The potential for significant unforeseen negative impacts is high.

If SB 1537 moves forward, I urge you to work towards striking sections 48 - 60. If the current efforts to infill available land within UGBs does not provide sufficient land for affordable housing, this concept could then be thoroughly analyzed during a regular session.

Thank you for your time.

Yours truly,



Greg H. Brown