

April 5, 2025

Position on Bills at 2025 Session of Oregon Legislature:

HB 3928: Oppose



The Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) is a coalition of over 50 local Indivisible groups throughout Oregon that cooperate and amplify their joint efforts to advance important federal and state legislation and engage with elected officials to promote causes for the benefit of all Oregonians.

COIN opposes HB 3928, which would allow counties to designate certain rural lands for rural housing development, outside of urban growth boundaries, without regard for or compliance with statewide land use planning laws. It also exempts the lands from recapture under existing law if the property tax breaks the owner has received due to the farm or forest nature of the land's use.

We agree with the learned testimony of former judge Paul Lipscomb for the A, the Oregon Land and Water Alliance, of Madison Kenney for Friends of the Columbia Gorge, of Rory Isbell for Central Oregon Landwatch, and many others. As Judge Lipscomb summarized:

We must oppose HB 3928 because it would encourage new development outside of Oregon's urban growth boundaries despite all existing state and county land use laws. And, further, it would exempt those converted properties from all recaptures of deferred past property taxes as would otherwise be required as a matter of law. This double whammy would be very bad public policy on at least two counts.

First, public protection of rural farms and forest lands for future farming and forest use is vital for the survival of farming, ranching and forest uses in Oregon. Second, new housing starts should be authorized only within existing Urban Growth Boundaries where they can get access to urban services and jobs without long commutes. Third, the proposed exemption from all past accrued but deferred property taxes for special farm and forest uses would unnecessarily transfer public assets to private developers.

The bill would now allow conversion of land to housing if, "in three or more of the previous five years the land has been irrigated or has been used for the production of farm or forest products, not including experimental production of dryland crops." Anyone could buy a productive, irrigated farm, idle it for 2 years, and sell it for housing development.

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