

Submitter: Philip Higgins
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1564

PUBLIC TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1564 Woodburn Urban Growth Boundary Expansion

Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am here to urge you to pass SB 1564 without delay.

Oregon is in crisis. The state received an "F" grade for housing affordability in 2024, with a median home price of \$563,896 against a median household income of just \$78,022. Oregonians now need an income of \$138,502 to afford a typical home—a 55% increase since 2020 KOIN.com. More than 20,000 Oregonians are experiencing homelessness, and Oregon ranks first in the nation for unsheltered families with children—14 times higher than the national average OPB.

This is a humanitarian catastrophe, and it demands extraordinary action.

The Local Process Has Failed

For decades, we've watched the housing crisis deepen while local planning processes grind forward at a glacial pace—hamstrung by endless appeals, public hearings that become platforms for obstruction, and a regulatory maze that prevents actual construction. Oregon has only 1.07 homes per household—the second-tightest housing market in the nation Wweek. We don't have the luxury of more delays.

The Economic Toll

Many of Oregon's fastest-growing occupations don't pay enough for workers to afford a one-bedroom apartment OPB. Our teachers, nurses, farmworkers, and essential workers cannot afford to live in the communities they serve. Businesses cannot recruit talent. Young families are leaving. This isn't just a housing issue—it's an economic crisis that threatens Oregon's future.

We Must Act Now

SB 1564 provides a path forward for Woodburn to expand housing where it's desperately needed. Yes, it supersedes this expansion. Yes, it streamlines the process. And yes, that's exactly what we need when conventional processes have demonstrably failed to house Oregonians.

The status quo is intolerable. While some advocate for preserving every acre of farmland at the urban edge, over 20,000 Oregonians sleep without shelter OPB. While some demand another study, another hearing, another delay, families are being priced out and children are growing up homeless.

Oregon's land use system was created to serve Oregonians—not to prevent them from having homes. When the system fails its fundamental purpose, the Legislature has not just the authority but the moral obligation to intervene.

I urge you to vote YES on SB 1564. Our families cannot wait any longer.

Thank you.

