

February 8, 2024

Chair Jama and Members of the Committee:

As Stephanie has reported I am Greg Macpherson, a State Representative from 2003 to 2009 and after that a member for eight years of the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

Last May Oregon celebrated the 50th anniversary of Senate Bill 100 from the 1973 session. Stephanie's father, Senator Ted Hallock, and mine, Senator Hector Macpherson, were the two sponsors of that bill who shepherded it through the legislative process until it was signed by legendary Governor Tom McCall. Senate Bill 100 launched a system for overseeing local land use plans in accordance with 19 statewide planning goals adopted after extensive public meetings held all over Oregon.

What these visionary leaders created is more important now than ever. As in much of the country, there is too little housing in Oregon. Consequently rents and house prices are rising faster than incomes, burdening many and forcing the most vulnerable into tent encampments.

One of the statewide planning goals is Goal 10 on Housing, requiring each local comprehensive plan to provide within its urban growth boundary an adequate housing supply of varied types that does not overburden the financial resources of residents. Only when the land available within the UGB is projected to be filled up within 20 years can the boundary be expanded under Statewide Planning Goal 14 on Urbanization.

The stubborn truth is that Oregon has failed to meet its obligations under Goal 10. The state has more than 10,000 acres of undeveloped land inside its UGBs that need infrastructure investments. It is no solution to our affordable housing shortage to expand urban growth boundaries outward while there is vacant land inside. And expanding UGBs is worse than unnecessary because it will attract scarce infrastructure dollars to the edges of our cities encouraging reliance on private automobiles rather than walking around compact neighborhoods, cycling, and transit.

You can make Senate Bill 1537 into a good bill. I urge you to amend it to remove Sections 48 through 60 that provide for UGB expansion and pass the remainder of the bill which is needed in response to our affordable housing crisis.

It would be terribly sad if this legislature were to tarnish Senate Bill 100, the crown jewel of Oregon's environmental legacy, right after the 50th anniversary of its enactment. Thank you for listening and I would be happy to take any questions.

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