

Submitter: Sally White
On Behalf Of: citizen
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB1537

I am writing to you as a registered voter regarding SB1537. Although the need for more affordable housing is important, this bill contains an unnecessary provision that will allow cities to unilaterally expand their Urban Growth Boundaries without following the normal process for such expansions. This provision will result in thousands of acres of our valuable agricultural land being needlessly brought into Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) production.

It's unnecessary because:

Oregon already has well over 10,000 acres of land available for housing construction inside existing UGBs.

We have a UGB expansion process that requires demonstration of need and encourages smart, compact, urban development. Urban sprawl is not necessary when there is so much within our present city boundaries to be utilized.

It's harmful because:

It siphons needed infrastructure dollars from inside existing UGBs where construction is more efficient and cost effective. And who will foot the bill for the infrastructure in these expanded boundaries? Of course it will be the taxpayers who will foot that bill. The only ones who will benefit from expanded urban boundaries are the developers, the lobbyists pushing it and anyone getting more than a pat on the back for helping out. Originally from the SW of the US and I can assure you that urban sprawl is not the answer to anything.

Oregon has a housing shortage, primarily for low- and moderate-income Oregonians. Such affordable housing is not likely to be built in these expanded UGB areas, far from existing infrastructure.

Again, the only ones who will benefit from this provision are developers, generally from out of the area, who will be able to buy land cheaper, sell it at a higher price and pass on to taxpayers the cost of building roads, sewers, water supplies and other necessary infrastructure.

As a constituent, I ask that you please amend SB1537 to remove this unnecessary and costly provision that will erode protection for our fertile, productive and irreplaceable agricultural land. In addition to needing affordable housing for those who do not even measure up to what is supposedly "affordable", we also need to bolster food production as that is also a much needed commodity.

Additionally, we need to protect our publicly accessible beaches from development negating the preservation that was put in place in the 1970s+.

Thanks for listening to someone who adhere's to Einstein's tenet: We can't expect different outcomes when we keep doing the same thing.