

Submitter: Malcolm Costello
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3928

I am opposed to HB 3928, which would allow counties to designate an unlimited amount of rural land, outside UGBs, for sprawling residential development.

It is over 50 years since Republican Governor Tom McCall wrote "The steady scatteration of unimaginative, dislocated urban development is introducing little cancerous cells of unmentionable ugliness into our rural landscape whose cumulative effect threatens to turn this state of scenic excitement into a land of ascetic boredom". It is thanks to his vision, echoing the fears of many Oregon voters and driven by great leaders in the Oregon Senate and Administration that we have preserved the incredible beauty that to this day attracts so many people and economic investment to this wonderful State, with the passage of SB 100 in January 1973.

The proposed changes under HB 3928 fly in the face of SB 100, once again seeking to create a "shameless threat to our environment and to the whole quality of life— unfettered despoiling of the land" through piecemeal development outside of our Urban Growth Boundaries. Our rural lands, including our wetlands, forests and farms are our most finite resource – once an acre disappears to development, it never returns, and what is unique and most beautiful about Oregon is gone for good.

We need statewide planning programs that protect and enhance agricultural investments, maintaining value in farmland as farmland while dampening the demands of farmers to generate a one-time windfall by selling out to developers. Development drives up costs per acre, puts increased traffic on rural roads in conflict with existing users, decreases available groundwater and unnecessarily puts more Oregonians at risk of wildfire, all while creating unwarranted despoilation of the Oregon landscape. We need to address our housing crisis within our UGBs by removing infrastructure barriers and reducing/enhancing regulations to make it more attractive for builders to create cottage clusters and 4-pex, 3-pex, duplex housing that is affordable to those at <120% AMI.

We do not need to promote speculative development on rural lands to increase individual wealth at the expense, forever, of the many who make Oregon home because of the remarkable beauty of our rural lands, preserved under our state-wide planning system.