

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB 2647

Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Andersen, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Eric Olsen. I've been a homebuilder and land developer for the past 25 years, with projects ranging from the Oregon coast to Central Oregon and the Willamette Valley. Currently, I'm developing two masterplanned communities: Fairview Addition in Salem and Edwards Addition in Monmouth.

In addition to my work in the field, I served on the Governor's Housing Production Advisory Council (HPAC), where I chaired the Land Permitting Work Group. That experience deepened my understanding of the systemic challenges we face in delivering the housing Oregonians need.

I grew up on a grass seed farm, and my parents were longtime members of 1000 Friends of Oregon. Like them, I strongly believe in preserving farmland and protecting environmentally sensitive areas outside our urban boundaries. But I also believe—just as strongly—that housing is an equally critical value for our state. And that's why I'm here today in **support of House Bill 2647-3**.

During my time on HPAC, our Land Permitting Work Group focused on restoring flexibility to the land use process. That flexibility is key—for both cities and developers—to unlock housing opportunities. Without it, we remain stuck in a cycle that undermines the viability of projects before they can ever break ground.

As a developer, I look at six core factors to determine whether a project can succeed:

- 1. The timeframe required to bring a project online**
- 2. Environmental constraints of the site**
- 3. The city's willingness and ability to support the project**

4. Market conditions

5. Infrastructure availability

6. A willing seller

This proposed UGB land exchange is a prime example of why flexibility matters. It is a prime site. **It would create a clear path to bring 400–800 new housing units to the city—on land that is ready to support it.** The City is simply asking for the flexibility to solve one critical issue: the extended timeframe it would otherwise take to bring this property into the UGB through traditional processes.

And I'll end with this: time is not just a detail—it's often the determining factor in whether a housing project lives or dies. **The longer it takes to entitle land, the less likely a project is to succeed.** In my experience, a project has a 50% chance of success after year one..and drops to 25% in year two...and just 12.5% in year three. **Delays exponentially reduce the chance for success.**

That's why traditional UGB land swaps so rarely succeed. And it's why this bill—and the flexibility it offers—is so important to meeting our housing goals, both locally and across the state.

Thank you for your time and your service to Oregon.

Eric Olsen, PE