

Submitter:

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On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1522

I urge you to ****OPPOSE SB 1522-1**** and preserve Oregon's proven land use planning system. This amendment poses serious threats to our state's economy, environment, and character. Here are the 10 critical reasons why:

1. DESTROYS THE CORE BALANCE OF OREGON'S LAND USE SYSTEM

SB 1522-1 eliminates the "prioritization scheme" that has successfully balanced urban growth with agricultural and forest preservation for decades. This balance is the foundation that makes Oregon different from every other Western state.

Removing it dismantles the entire system that has made our state livable and economically strong.

2. **GUARANTEES 2. SPRAWL ONTO PRIME FARMLAND INSTEAD OF SUITABLE LANDS

By prohibiting consideration of soil types and existing land uses, this amendment forces cities to develop the "easiest" land to urbanize—which is flat, well-drained farmland. This ignores far better alternatives like adjacent rural residential areas that are already zoned and planned for potential development. It's backwards planning that guarantees we pave over our best agricultural resources first

3. THREATENS AGRICULTURE—OREGON'S #2 INDUSTRY

Oregon's agriculture generates billions in economic value and supports tens of thousands of jobs. SB 1522-1 removes protections for farmland, opening our most productive agricultural land to urban conversion. Losing this land undermines food security, rural economies, and the agricultural heritage that defines Oregon.

4. ELIMINATES THOUGHTFUL LAND-USE ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATION

The current system requires cities to evaluate multiple factors before designating urban reserves. SB 1522-1 strips away this deliberative process and replaces it with a simplistic "easiest to develop" standard. This removes any requirement for genuine planning, environmental analysis, or consideration of long-term consequences.

5. ACCELERATES CLIMATE CHANGE AND INCREASES TRANSPORTATION EMISSIONS

Oregon's compact, well-planned cities reduce vehicle miles traveled and carbon emissions. Sprawling development onto distant farmland forces longer commutes, increases car dependency, and undermines our climate goals. The amendment directly contradicts Oregon's climate commitments by forcing development patterns that increase pollution.

6. DESTROYS RURAL LANDSCAPES AND CITY SEPARATION

One of Oregon's greatest assets is the clear distinction between our cities and rural areas. SB 1522-1 eliminates the rural-urban separation that defines our landscape character. Cities will sprawl toward each other, creating the exact same undifferentiated suburban sprawl plaguing other Western states—the opposite of what makes Oregon desirable.

7. UNDOES RECENT CRITICAL WORK BY DLCD AND STAKEHOLDERS

The December 2025 Land Conservation and Development Commission adoption of rules implementing the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis represents months of careful, collaborative work. SB 1522-1 upends this process and eliminates the thoughtful framework just adopted. This wastes resources and undermines stakeholder trust in the planning process.

8. REMOVES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

Beyond farmland, the current system protects forests, wetlands, riparian areas, and other critical natural resources. By eliminating consideration of existing land uses and soil conditions, SB 1522-1 removes safeguards for these ecosystems. It prioritizes development over environmental stewardship and puts Oregon's natural heritage at risk.

9. IGNORES ALREADY-PLANNED ALTERNATIVES TO FARMLAND

Many areas have rural residential lands, previously urbanized areas, or lands already zoned for potential development that could accommodate growth more appropriately than prime farmland. SB 1522-1 eliminates any requirement to consider these alternatives. It's inefficient planning that ignores obvious better solutions.

10. SETS A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT FOR DISMANTLING OREGON'S UNIQUE SYSTEM

This amendment isn't just a technical fix—it's an attack on the fundamental principles.