

To Senate Majority Leader Leiber and Senator Elizabeth Steiner,

I am writing in opposition of HB 4026-1. I am personally dismayed to see yet another attack on citizen rights, this time here in Oregon. All across the US we are seeing voters being suppressed and citizen's rights being taken away. Every day, we as a country seem to slide closer and closer to a dystopian society, where human rights are decided by a few in power. This bill takes away the constitutional rights of local Oregon citizens to participate in the democratic process and have their voices be heard.

A local citizen of North Plains has very clearly outlined many of the issues with this bill. They are as follows:

1. **The bill is probably unconstitutional.** This bill restricts the constitutional right to call a referendum. The state can only do that through a constitutional amendment, and not a statute.
2. **The process has been undemocratic.** This provision was amended into a completely different bill in a secretive way - halfway through a short legislative session on a Friday afternoon. Now it's not even clear which committee it's going to and how people can testify. This is no way to make legislation that could limit a constitutional right.
3. **The bill is retroactive to stop a measure that's already on the May ballot.** Ten percent of North Plains voting residents signed a petition to get a referendum on their ballot. This bill would retroactively invalidate the legally exercised will of the people.
4. **Referenda are hard to bring and rare, but important to be able to use for bad cases.** It's extremely difficult to get 10% of registered voters' signatures in 30 days, and referenda will only be used for the worst cases. In North Plains, there was limited public engagement {give examples from your experience} and it would be the biggest UGB expansion by percentage in the state's history.
5. **Referenda are not a threat to housing strategies inside UGBs,** since referenda can't be brought for localized decisions like siting a supermarket or zoning changes.

I myself am a new single woman farmer that purchased a farm in 2011. I grow Christmas trees, a major crop here in Oregon, and a mitigator of climate change. I am trying to preserve my farm and land for future generations. However, my farm is now under threat due to a proposed road expansion that requires ***an exemption to Oregon State Law*** to proceed. It seems that there are no laws that stand, all can be brushed aside by those in power to take what is wanted by the few and not the majority. Democracy itself is under threat and I ask that you please discard this bill and allow the citizens of North Plains to be heard.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tanya Steele

Owner of Lone Owl Farm