

Submitter: Richard van Pelt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1522

This testimony is in opposition to SB 1522-1

Saturday we celebrate Oregon's 167th anniversary. There is something unique about Oregon, explicit in her motto: "She flies with her own wings." Ironically, this bill seeks to clip the very wings that distinguishes Oregon from its neighbors.

Nothing links us to our past. We depend upon each other and upon our legislature. Unfortunately, flying with your own wings faces headwinds each time the legislature convenes.

Measures introduced remind us that the process of making public policy is like watching an animal being sent down the chute to slaughter. Hyperbole? Possibly: But "she flies with her own wings" reminds us that we do not have to be like California or Idaho. There is no principle at work other the cui bono. And with this bill, it is Oregon that loses.

Every session, the people fear you will put words into law that eviscerate the spirit of the law, turning what was designed as a scalpel into a tenderizer. "She flies with her own wings" is a hard dream to live by when your objective is to make Oregon more like California and Idaho.

I was around when SB 100 and "Don't Californicate Oregon" had meaning, substance and value. I labored hard to defeat Measure 37 and to pass Measure 49. I do not need to restate the objections of organizations such as One Thousand Friends and Friends of Marion County.

I oppose this bill because it appears to show that the legislative interest seems more concerned with development and putting words into Oregon's land use program that would not only clip the wings of what it means to be an Oregonian; it would neuter land use policy that the people have supported for half a century. The problem with all legislation is that it risks filtering out the labor that made Oregon Oregon.

This bill tells us that the virtues of the past have no value today. This bill substantively alters the underlying intent of SB 100 and the land use program it gave birth to. It is not compatible with the intent of SB 100 or with the overwhelming support Ballot Measure 49 received, which sought to affirm the underlying principles my generation and previous generations passed that gave lift to the state that flies with its own wings.

I am not naive to the legislative process. I spent many sessions analyzing legislation for its ability to either enhance or detract from my agency's mission. There is a certain hypocrisy in legislation which inserts into the heart of a bill which is the law, what atherosclerosis does to a legislator's heart. No one wants to stand up and say they come, not to praise land use, but to bury it.