

February 7, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development
From: Aileen Kaye, Horse Owner, South Marion County

Re: SB 1537-- Please Remove UGB Sections of Bill

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-chair Anderson, and members of the Committee,

I am asking that you remove the sections of SB 1537 that relate to any type of extension of Urban Growth Boundaries. My reasons:

1. This bill is getting the cart before the horse. Anyone who knows their city sees every day the vacant land and buildings inside the UGB. All that is needed to house people with no shelter or to house people if they lose their housing is money for infrastructure and or remodeling—inside the UGB. There is no reason to weaken our land use laws by allowing developers to ruin land outside current UGBs.
2. This bill says the UGB expansion is a “one-time” allowance. I do not at all believe that. This governor and legislature weakened our UGB procedures just last session by passing SB 4 and SB 70! Both were said to be “one-time” allowances. Obviously, not true. And the way the farmers from Washington County who tried to explain to the legislative committee how SB 4 was breaking the Grand Bargain made a few years earlier was shameful.
3. The housing built outside the UGB via SB 1537 would not be for the population Governor Kotek promised to house! These houses will only lure middle and upper middle class people from out-of –state to move here! The opposite of what we need.
4. Farmland would be destroyed if houses are built on the urban reserves. Food is going to be more important than housing in the future due to climate change. Once you build on farmland, you can’t get it back to farmland.
5. The UGB expansion criteria in SB 1537 are draconian! No one can protest where the new houses would be built. A farmer next door is out of luck! Even the county has no say! This is a violation of Goal 1, citizen involvement. If someone wants to stop the housing development, they have to go to circuit court (very expensive) and pay the builder’s attorney fees if the builder prevails! This is a gift to home builders as is all the tax payer paid funds for their infrastructure!

6. This UGB sections of this bill will create urban sprawl and lead to the Californication of our bountiful and beautiful state.

A recent DHM Research poll found:

“ Oregonians are supportive of proposed tax incentives and deductions in the legislature but oppose building on farm and forestlands.

When asked about current bills in the Oregon Legislature to address housing, the level of support varies widely. The most supported (81%) among those surveyed was freezing property taxes on residences for those ages 67 or older. A majority of people also support both providing tax incentives to convert office buildings to housing (64%) and creating a tax deduction for people who rent out a room in their primary home (61%). Oregonians are split (41% support, 41% oppose) on eliminating the mortgage tax deduction for second homes, and are opposed (20% support, 71% oppose) to allowing new housing development on farm and forestlands.” **Urban reserves are farmland!!**

7. Governor Kotek has been publicizing that she has met her goals.

<https://share.newsbreak.com/63j8sj7b>

If so, why is she giving farmland to developers outside the UGB??? I have my theories on that, but will not state them here.

To end, I will say that I am extremely concerned that Oregon’s land use laws are not cherished by our governor and legislators as they used to be by governors and legislators in previous years. I hope the governor and each legislator will watch the locally made film, “An Oregon Story” so they will learn the blood, sweat, and tears that has gone into creating and maintaining what keeps Oregon “Oregon”.

Thank you for your time.