

Testimony of Kyung Park, State Affairs Advisor

Testimony on SB 49 -1

House Committee on Housing and Development

March 5, 2025



Metro is the regional government for the greater Portland metropolitan area, tasked by Oregon statute with making decisions every six years about how and where the region will grow. Our region has a strong track record of supporting the core purposes of Oregon's statewide planning system – protecting farms and forests by facilitating efficient urban development, while providing additional room for people and jobs when needed by expanding the urban growth boundary.

Metro opposes the -1 amendment to SB 49. Our concerns lie with section 2 of the amendment which eliminates minimum densities.

Minimum density requirements are the primary tool to encourage redevelopment and infill within a city's urban growth boundary. It ensures land is used efficiently. Removing minimum density requirements will lead to urban growth boundary expansions and outward sprawl into farm and forest lands. In turn, outward sprawl creates adverse consequences on climate, natural resources, and rural land uses while increasing automobile dependency.

In Metro's 2018 Urban Growth Report, it was determined that 97% of the future population growth through 2038 can be accommodated within the urban growth boundary set in 2011. This remarkable accomplishment is testament to the fact that Metro and the cities and counties in the region have been extremely effective in directing growth into existing urban areas and preventing sprawl into farm and forest land. Minimum density requirements are pivotal to achieve this outcome.

There are existing procedures at the municipal level for changing minimum density requirements on developed lands. A statewide change to address a handful of situations is overreaching and results in unintended consequences. Analyzing existing procedures may be a better approach than eliminating minimum densities statewide.