

February 10, 2025

TO: Members of the House Committee Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

FR: Duke Shepard, Oregon Business & Industry

RE: OBI Opposes HB 2950

Co-chairs Helm and Owens, and members of the committee, for the record, my name is Duke Shepard, I am a senior policy director for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

With deep respect for the values and motivations that have driven the creation of this bill, we must, unfortunately, oppose it. Oregon's current land use system, while built with important intentions, remains outdated, overly complex, and counterproductive to addressing critical issues like housing, economic opportunity, and social equity. Our state continues to face a severe housing shortage, limited access to affordable housing, and insufficient industrial land to meet growing demands. Despite efforts, the situation has only worsened over the past few years, and we are now in the third year of an executive-declared homelessness emergency. The current system is simply not meeting the needs of our communities.

While we recognize the importance of public involvement, we must acknowledge that Oregon's land use system is already bogged down with bureaucratic processes, endless appeals, and a culture of "Not In My Backyard" (NIMBY) that stifles progress. In this context, it is unclear how revising the public involvement goal addresses the urgent, systemic issues at hand. More meetings, hearings, and appeals will not solve the housing crisis or support economic growth.

Furthermore, the bill, as currently structured, fails to reflect the diversity of voices that are integral to our land use system. Key stakeholders—business owners, industrial property owners, farmers, homeowners, builders, workers in the trades, and others who directly interact with our land use policies—are not adequately represented. There are no provisions for ensuring that a range of perspectives, political beliefs, and lived experiences are taken into account. This is particularly concerning as equitable, balanced decision-making is necessary for creating a land use system that works for everyone, not just a

select few.

If this bill is to move forward, we urge lawmakers to revise it to foster a more inclusive, balanced, and representative approach—one that invites diverse viewpoints from across the political and social spectrum. The goal must be to attain a land use system that works for all of Oregon, ensuring that everyone has access to affordable housing, economic opportunities and sustainable development.

In the meantime, more effective legislative action would include advancing transparency, modernization, and inclusion in land use and permitting processes. We encourage support for the following initiatives brought forward by OBI in our competitiveness agenda:

- **HB 2692:** Rulemaking Modernization
- **HB 3382:** Rulemaking Transparency/OLIS for Rulemaking
- **HB 3091:** Permitting Updates

Additionally, we applaud and wish to uplift the initiatives put forward by Washington's Governor in his executive orders, encouraging responsive and accountable agency action on [permitting](#) and [housing](#). We strongly recommend that Oregon adopt similar strategies to promote equity, transparency, and accountability within our own legislative framework.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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