



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Senator Kayse Jama, Chair
Senator Dick Anderson, Vice Chair

Subject: Senate Bill 1537

February 7, 2024

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comment on Senate Bill 1537.

We appreciate the opportunity for a one-time site addition to urban growth boundaries, and would like to recommend that Section 52 (1)(B) be amended to allow for residentially zoned properties larger than 20 acres that are designated for public facilities and services, like schools, hospitals, or other projects be exempt from consideration .

For the Housing Land Adjustments section, it would be helpful to acknowledge conflicts for providing variances to things like setbacks and building materials when jurisdictions are constrained by competing legislation. In particular, lands within the Wildland Urban Interface that are deemed high and extreme risk will be required to meet certain standards. This conflict could create unnecessary delays or result in litigation for jurisdictions attempting to preserve public safety while still ensuring opportunities for housing development.

More generally, we have concerns about unintended consequence and unfunded mandates with respect to the Housing Accountability and Production Office and Limited Land Use Decisions section. Conflicts with other statewide Land Use Planning Goals deserve greater consideration, particularly for rural jurisdictions that grapple with significant natural hazard and resource protections. Aspects of this bill, like the Financial Assistance Supporting Housing Production, are significant enough to likely move the needle on housing production particularly for non-metropolitan jurisdictions without offering additional rules that will be require significant investment on the local jurisdictions to bring plans into compliance. We would recommend pausing on both the Housing Accountability and Production Office and Limited Land Use Decisions section until more detailed housing analysis can be presented to the legislature upon potential passage of SB 1529/HB 4029/HB 4064.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Wasco County Board of Commissioners


Steven D. Kramer, Chair



Scott C. Hege, Vice-Chair



Philip L. Brady, County Commissioner