

Submitter: Laurie Dougherty
On Behalf Of: Amend SB 1537
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB1537

Chair Jama and members of the Committee,

I urge you to amend SB 1537 regarding housing to remove provisions for expansion of Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs). Living in Salem where there are many homeless people, and as a renter with a modest retirement income, I am very aware of the need for affordable housing. However sprawling into rural areas is not the way to do it. New housing is needed in cities close to jobs, schools, stores, services, park, and playgrounds. There is ample space for new housing within existing Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs).

Spreading new housing beyond UGBs encourages big homes on large lots. This is a plan for accommodating wealthy homeowners and enriching developers. It is not a plan for affordable housing.

UGBs are key components of the innovative land use laws and programs that for decades have preserved and protected the beauty and bounty of Oregon's natural and working lands. UGBs both prevent sprawl from encroaching on rural areas and create compact cities. Housing construction can be accomplished faster and more affordably where streets, utilities and other infrastructure already exist.

Oregon's land use regime is doubly beneficial for the climate. Farms, forests, and wetlands absorb and store climate-changing emissions. Compact cities reduce the need for driving which is a major contributor to climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please amend SB 1537 to foster affordable housing within existing Urban Growth Boundaries.