



**BETSY CLOSE
OREGON STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 8**

March 7, 2013

Testimony for SB 502

Thank you Chair, Roblan, Vice Chair Baertshiger and members of the committee. I have sponsored SB 502 on behalf of Linn County Commissioner John Lindsey. Comm. Lindsey has been a decade-long advocate for the park system in Linn County. This bill deals with a DLCD Rule that was amended in 2010 to prohibit new schools, new churches and new parks and camp grounds within 3 miles of an urban growth boundary.

But this is about much more than land use, This is an issue of religious liberty and equal protection, and the Federal religious liberty law (RLUIPA) Religious Land Use and Institutional Persons Act) RLUIPA authorizes a court to determine whether a land-use review is in violation of discriminating against religious uses. The free exercise clause of the First Amendment appears to be under attack by some Oregon agencies. This bill is an attempt to re-assert those time-honored dictates that:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof....”

Thank you.