



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON

March 14, 2013

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Senator Chris Edwards and Representative Ben Unger, Co-chairs
Members of the Committee
WaysandMeans.NaturalResourcesSub@state.or.us

Re: SB 5530 – Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots nonpartisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League first studied land use in 1959 and has been active since supporting our statewide land use planning program with local implementation. We believe that Goal 1 requires open access to the land use process and that all citizens have a stake in the development of their communities.

The League believes this department is critical to the health and wellbeing of Oregonians. As we plan our cities and counties, we are deciding where we will all live, work, shop, play and how we'll get there. Planning determines what kind of infrastructure communities will need. It helps assure our natural areas are protected and we have not only agricultural and forest industrial lands, but lands for other industrial uses.

We usually come to you in full support of as much local government grant monies as possible because it is those grants that help pay for public engagement in local planning efforts. However, this session there are new policy bills that may change the way local governments do some of their planning. We do, however, want to be sure that DLCD maintains field staff around the state to help local communities with local planning needs.

We are supportive of POP 108, Population Forecasting. We realize that HB 2253 will set up a process that reduces the opportunity for appeal, but we are hopeful that having Portland State's Population Center as a neutral third party with skills to be able to provide reasonably accurate population forecasts annually for counties and every four years for cities will provide better outcomes. That will be a great improvement over today's process where many counties don't have the money to update their forecasts, leaving cities that may be growing and who need to consider urban growth expansion frustrated and unable to move forward. Or where cities end up with dueling forecasts from a variety of interested parties, leading to those appeals everyone dislikes.

We support POPs 101, 102 and 105. Having a person housed at DLCD to help with disaster mitigation planning is really important as we deal with more and varied disasters. As a part of the 2009 transportation package, an agreement was reached to also work on voluntary

greenhouse gas reduction ideas with our Metropolitan Planning Organizations. And we believe that the agency needs enough money in its budget to “hire” Attorney General services when violations of the system rise to the level of state concern.

We support work on their data system, POP 106, so long as the intent of gathering information from among agencies helps all agencies and local governments do their work more efficiently and with better outcomes. We are intrigued by Senator Dingfelder’s questions around the Metro fee model. As currently envisioned, I believe their system is meant to be an open system like their marine map—which was federally funded. The department is not envisioned to provide special request maps, but its interactivity would allow any user to obtain the information on their own. I believe Metro does “projects” for the private sector and therefore can charge for those services.

If HB 2254 passes, then POP 513 will be critical to implementing that law. The amended bill as I believe we will soon see sets parameters—sideboards—but the hard work will be done by rulemaking. That effort must have broad involvement by a wide variety of stakeholders and citizens. Involvement costs money. Staffing such effort costs money.

There has been much discussion about the role of the Regional Solutions Teams during this presentation. The League is following a number of bills this session around the intersection between these Teams and the individual agencies now involved and those that may be included and the role of the Governor in these teams. We support Regional Solutions Teams so long as their work is open and citizen driven. We are very concerned that these Teams may replace local Comprehensive Plans as some kind of priority-setting entities without a full community discussion. Including additional agency staff, such as the Department of Agriculture or Forestry, is laudable, but is that in their budgets? There are a lot of moving parts that need to be considered before DLCD’s final budget is approved. We hope to be part of that discussion.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Robin Wisdom
President



Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator

cc: Richard Whitman, Governor’s Natural Resources Advisor
Jim Rue, Director, Department of Land Conservation and Development