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PAMELA TREECE
WESTSIDE ECONOMIC ALLIANCE



February 4, 2014

Re: HB 4078

Dear Legislator,

The population of the Portland metropolitan region is continuing to grow, bringing the need for housing and employment, but the region lacks the land it requires to meet these needs. Legally, its ability to designate a 20-year land supply is in jeopardy.

In October 2011, after a lengthy public outreach process, Metro made a unanimous decision to expand the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in four areas – all in Washington County. Since that decision was made, Washington County's population has grown by 14,620 people and 13,300 jobs. This was the first UGB expansion approved since 2002. The Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) also approved Metro's decision in June 2012.

Plans for homes and employment lands have been made for the four new expansion areas. Unfortunately, all these plans are all on hold due to the UGB appeals filed with the Court of Appeals. The Court will not rule on this until prior appeals of Metro's Urban and Rural Reserves are completed – another lengthy public land use process. There are no deadlines for these rulings.

Ironically, Metro's determination of the Urban and Rural Reserves, which was also approved by the LCDC, were to provide certainty for future UGB expansions in the Portland metropolitan region, yet the 2010-2011 decision has been tied up for more than a year in the Court of Appeals. Tying the UGB decision to the Urban and Rural Reserves decision sends a message of uncertainty for those looking to invest in the region – to build or finance infrastructure, businesses, jobs, or housing in these new expansion areas. These areas could be generating income for Oregonians and tax revenue for local governments and the state. Instead, land sits idle and opens the question of whether the region can meet its obligation to have a 20 year land supply for jobs and housing. Also, Metro will be required by law to start its review of the UGB again in 2015.

Westside Economic Alliance would like the State Legislature to recognize the need for change in Oregon's land use system. The process for UGB expansions are too lengthy – months of public process are turning into years, and the region is being negatively impacted, jeopardizing its economy and standards of living. The litigation and appeals that have come after these lengthy public processes are tying the system up even further and costing Oregonians resources, investments and certainty.



WEA is sensitive to the UGB process, but at the same time encourages the State Legislature to seriously consider a short term solution, such as HB 4078 - a solution that continues to move the region's economy forward in a timely manner and meets the demands of its growing population.

On behalf of our region, WEA is asking the State Legislature to intervene and affirm Metro's 2011 UGB expansion decision. This will send a signal of certainty for those looking to invest resources in these expansion areas. In the longer term, WEA would suggest an evaluation of the UGB process be completed.

WEA is a business advocacy organization, representing both the private and public sectors on the Westside of the Portland metropolitan region. It advocates for public policies that nurture the region's economic vitality.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela H. Treece". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Pamela Treece
Executive Director