

To: Senate Rules Committee
Re: HB 4078
From: Russ Dondero

For the record:

Given the work done in the House on HB 4078, I urge your "yes" vote on the bill.

In an era when government is often grid locked and acrimony is intense, it is reassuring to see an example of our checks and balances system in Oregon work on an issue that is highly divisive, land use planning.

When the Oregon Court of Appeals overturned Metro's 50-year growth plan accusing Washington County of using "pseudo factors" to determine urban/rural reserves, the stage was set for a train wreck that could have taken years to unravel.

The Legislature created the urban and rural reserves designation in 2007. The Oregon Appeals court threw out the specific designations of rural and urban reserves in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties.

The court remanded the issue back to Metro and the three metro area counties. The court's action created a potential paralysis of land use planning in the metro area years in the making. It could have taken 4-6 years to redraw the UGB map.

Housing and industrial development in the metro area would have stopped throwing people out of work and derailing a recovering economy in the metro area.

Into this breach stepped the Oregon legislature under the leadership of **Representative Brian Clem** (D, Salem), chair of the House Rural Communities committee that was already working on HB 4078.

Chair Clem working with **Representatives John Davis** (R, Wilsonville) and **Ben Unger** (D, Hillsboro) vetted a plan to avoid another messy debate in the metro area.

The modified HB 4078 bill removed prime farmland in the Helvetia area of Washington County from the urban reserves while opening up around 2,000 acres in South Cooper Mountain and South Hillsboro for future development. These were the keys to unlocking the gridlock.

The timing of a new map for urban/rural reserves was the key coming days after the Appeals Court ruling. The legislature's intervention preempted the legal wrangling that has bogged down this process since metro area governments approved the original plan in 2010.

Chair Clem in meetings in Salem and Hillsboro with key stakeholders from all sides got consensus on the "grand bargain."

That consensus held firm in the House Rules committee chaired by **Representative Val Hoyle** (D, Eugene) who like Clem did a masterful job of moving HB 4078.

It was inspiring to see the Oregon legislature work in the spirit of comity on a bi-partisan basis to bring stakeholders together who have a history of animosity and mistrust.

Chairs Clem and Holvey deserve credit for leading a fair and open process. Vindication of their work was passage of HB 4078 in a 59-0 vote in the House, one hopes the same result will happen in the Senate.

The system worked despite teetering on a legal and political precipice.

In my 40 years of watching the legislature in action, I've never seen such collaborative effort on a bill so fraught with controversy. Kudos to all involved in getting us to a "win/win" endgame!

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