

TO: Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
FR: Arthur Towers & Cary Allen, Oregon Trial Lawyers Association
Re: Opposition to SB 210
2/16/2015

We are expressing our concern on behalf of members of the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association who fight to make sure that the public has a voice in the land use planning process.

Senate Bill 210 may be well-intentioned but we are concerned that it may create a whole series of new problems. These results would include:

- Rushed, poorly made decisions on important natural resource issues;
- Impossible demands on agencies already stretched beyond their limits because of understaffing and budget cuts;
- Less opportunity for public involvement in land and resource use decisions;
- Greatly extended timelines for applicants who are unable to buy their way to the front of the line;
- Oregon's excellent Comprehensive Plan process for land use planning would be dismantled.

The concept of resource users shouldering the costs of agency review may not be a bad one, within limits. But this bill does not address that in any meaningful way. It is to be expected that the largest, best funded proposals will be the ones that seek this expedited review process.

A 120 day, or any arbitrary timeline for a project of significant magnitude, would make it impossible for DSL to carry out their responsibilities under the law to anything but a very superficial degree. A permit such as this requires coordination with several other state and federal agencies, who would not be subject to this law and under no compulsion to meet such an artificial timeline.

Meaningful public input and the application of agency expertise is essential to wise use of public resources. It is not possible for the agencies concerned to comply with this proposed law and still comply with all of the other laws that apply to issuing these permits.

We urge a NO vote on SB 210.