

WALLOWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*Mike Hayward, Chairman
Susan Roberts, Commissioner
Paul Castilleja, Commissioner*

*101 S. River St. Room 202
Enterprise, OR 97828
541-426-4543*

To: Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Re: Senate Bill 25
Date: February 23, 2015

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee,

Wallowa County supports SB 25.

SB 25 gives Wallowa County the chance to develop flexible land use goals that are appropriate for our community and in order to recruit new economic development opportunities to our regional area.

Wallowa County supports Oregon's land use planning system and understands the benefits to Oregonians across the state. However, the current system forces many "one-size fits all" solutions to challenges where one-size does not fit all. Rural Oregon is struggling to retain its residents because they lack economic opportunities. SB 25 provides a more flexible approach that will allow rural Oregon to be more responsive to demand and to decide what is best for our communities. Importantly, this bill gives counties a choice; those counties who do not wish to use these new tools do not have them forced upon them. There are many bills that are addressing economic development in rural Oregon, but SB 25 provides us the tools to help ourselves and drive positive local economic development.

Wallowa County values our natural resources, people and businesses. We understand the need to balance these interests and we know best how to do that in our community. SB 25 will help us streamline the land use process so that new opportunities can be developed to help our county, our schools, our businesses, and most importantly, our citizens. Importantly, since the land use decision making will be made locally, citizen involvement will be more robust and feedback more timely. Finally, a similar law has been in place in Washington for years and those counties who have chosen to use the streamlined process have seen economic development and have maintained a healthy environment.

Wallowa County urges your support of SB 25. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Hayward
Chairman, Wallowa County Board of Commissioners
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