



**Curry County
Board of Commissioners**

David Brock Smith,
Commissioner

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Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Chair Edwards, Vice Chair Olsen & Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of SB 25, which is a step in the right direction regarding the Land Use disparity between rural and urban Oregon.

Curry County's rural economy is diverse like many counties throughout the State of Oregon and the ability to work with what you have is essential for rural county survival. Senate Bill 25 would allow Curry and other rural counties the ability to better work with the resources within our counties and promote responsible economic development and growth for our residents through a local citizen driven public process. This public process of adopting a local comprehensive land use plan is ideal for our rural counties and would give us the necessary tools to craft what fits best for not only my rural southern Oregon county and communities, but other rural counties as well. Curry County's land allocation has sixty six percent owned and managed by the Federal Government, with one percent owned by the State, seven percent farm and twenty two percent private timberland. This leaves us only able to fully assess and collect from roughly four and a half percent of the property base within Curry County and the current statewide planning goals do not help address these disparities.

Senate Bill 25 will greatly assist Curry County, but only if amended and I have submitted the necessary amendment this afternoon. The amendment would change language to allow counties with less than 6 percent population growth since the previous decennial census. Although Curry County has seen a 5.8 percent population growth since the 2000 decennial census, this growth is skewed and is mainly retirees, as it is relatively inexpensive to live within Curry County. This growth is also from investors, as 30 percent of the properties within Curry County are owned by people who do not live in Curry County. This 5.8 percent growth is not from the needed working families and the jobs they need to live in Curry County. A good example of this and the irony as well is the School Board members and staff you visited with today. I am also a Port Orford-Langlois School Board member and those of you that visited with rural county members like myself, more than likely heard the same message, we have over 70 percent of our students on free and reduced lunch programs and we cannot continue at the current rate of declining enrollment.

These courses will not alter without action and working families and the needed family wage jobs to support them will not come to fruition without understanding and assistance. Senate Bill 25, with the proposed amendment, is a piece of that assistance and will give Curry and other rural counties the responsible tools needed for local input to craft the needed comprehensive land use plans that are best for our rural counties and their communities.

Chair Edwards, Vice Chair Olsen and Committee Members, I thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today and I encourage your 'do pass' recommendation on SB 25 within the proposed amendment. This legislation is a much need step to help grow local rural economies and I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Brock Smith".

David Brock Smith, Commissioner
Curry County Board of Commissioners