

County Court

221 S. Oregon St. PO Box 427 Condon, OR 97823
Office: 541.384.6351 Admin: 541.384.3303 Fax: 541.384.3304



Oregon State Senate
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Capital
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Senate Bill 25

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 25.

SB 25 gives Gilliam County the chance to set our own land use goals to help us recruit new economic development opportunities to our regional area.

Gilliam County strongly supports land use planning and we have extensive experience in it. Our county has permitted a solid waste facility and renewable energy projects that have reaped huge benefits to us because of land use planning. But also, we know of opportunities that were lost due to the State of Oregon's land use planning regulations. Our area can no longer afford to lose these opportunities simply because these land use regulations aren't specific to our county. We need to find new ways to attract industry and changes to land use regulations can help small counties, like Gilliam, to accomplish it. Through SB 25, the state legislature can help us, help ourselves. We aren't asking for resources, we are asking for a chance to productive on our own.

Gilliam County is capable of doing this, we will still be required to plan. For us to continue with the benefits we now have, we would do it anyway. With SB 25 to help us streamline the process, new opportunities can be developed to help our county, our schools, our businesses, and most importantly, our citizens. Please allow us to get on a level playing field with our competition, the State of Washington.

My Best Regards,

Steven D. Shaffer

Gilliam County Judge



MALHEUR COUNTY

COUNTY COURT

251 B Street West, #5, Vale, Oregon 97918, (541) 473-5124, Fax (541) 473-5576

February 20, 2015

Oregon State Senate
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 25

Dear Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 25, a bill that gives Malheur County the flexibility and control to set our own land use goals and standards as we attempt to grow our economy and create opportunities for our citizens.

We support land use planning, and are confident that we can best manage the very limited growth that we are experiencing in our county. At the same time, it is difficult for us to compete with our neighbors to the east in Idaho, who have the ability to attract new development much quicker and easier than we can, due to our litigious state planning system. Senate Bill 25 gives us a chance to streamline our process, while still requiring us to plan, which we would do in any event.

As you well know, Eastern Oregon economies are struggling mightily. Finding new ways to attract industry is critical for us, and we would like help from the state legislature. In the case of Senate Bill 25, we are not asking for any state resources. Rather, we simply want a measure of self-determination that will allow us to put our best foot forward for our existing businesses and companies that seek to relocate to our county.

Very Truly Yours,

Dan P. Joyce
Malheur County Court Judge



500 COURT STREET
P.O. Box 365
MORO, OREGON 97039

ESTABLISHED
FEBRUARY 25, 1889

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

GARY THOMPSON
JUDGE
565-3416

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee,

TOM MCCOY
COMMISSIONER
565-3416

Sherman County supports SB 25.

MICHAEL SMITH
COMMISSIONER
565-3416

SB 25 gives Sherman County the ability to develop flexible land use goals that are appropriate for our community in order to recruit new economic development opportunities to our region.

JENINE MCDERMID
CLERK
565-3606

Sherman 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. Most importantly, this bill gives counties a choice; those counties who do not wish to use these new tools will not have them forced upon them. There are many bills addressing economic development in rural Oregon but SB 25 provides us with the tools to help ourselves and drive positive local economic development.

ROSS TURNEY
ASSESSOR
565-3505

MARNENE BENSON-WOOD
TREASURER
565-3553

Sherman 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. Since the land use decision making will be made locally, citizen involvement will be more robust and feedback more timely. A similar law has been in place in Washington for years and those counties who have chosen to use the streamlined process have seen growth in economic development while maintaining a healthy environment.

RON MCDERMID
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
565-3572

BRAD LOHREY
SHERIFF
565-3622

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

MARK COLES
ROAD MASTER
565-3271
501 4TH STREET

Sincerely,

Gary Thompson, Judge
Sherman County Court



County Court of Grant County

Scott W. Myers, County Judge
Chris B. Labhart, Commissioner
Boyd Britton, Commissioner

February 23, 2015

Oregon State Senate
Environmental and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Capitol

RE: Senate Bill 25

Dear Committee,

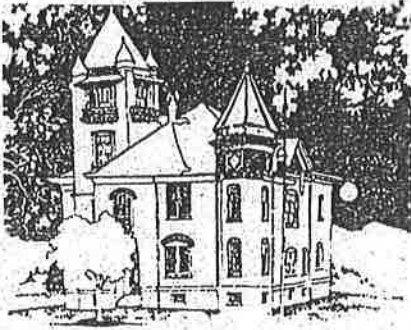
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 25, a bill that gives Grant County the flexibility and control to set our own land use goals and standards as we attempt to grow our economy and create opportunities for our citizens.

We have lost population and Grant County's economy has been struggling for several years. Finding new ways to attract industry is critical to the future of our communities. We support land use planning, and are confident that we can best manage the very limited growth that we are experiencing in our county. This legislation would allow us to strengthen our existing business environment and attract new companies that seek to relocate to our county.

Senate Bill 25 gives Grant County the chance to streamline our process, while still requiring us to plan, which we would do in any event. We support this bill and would like to see the state legislature move forward with positive action on this issue.

Sincerely,

Scott W. Myers
County Judge



Wheeler County

County Court

P.O. Box 447 • Fossil, Oregon 97830-0447
Wheeler County Courthouse • 701 Adams St.
(541) 763-3460 • FAX (541) 763-2026

Oregon State Senate
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

February 20, 2015

RE: Senate Bill 25

Dear Committee Members:

It is with pleasure that Wheeler County has the opportunity to testify before the Committee in support of SB 25. Since the timber industry shut down in 1978, Wheeler County has experienced a 47% decline in population. Our county has 1.1 million acres, 778,000 privately owned with 68% zoned Exclusive Farm Use, 27% zoned Exclusive Timber Use. With no transmission lines available for wind projects, no Interstate for transport, no river traffic, no rail lines, our economy continues to falter from declining population.

Wheeler County has spectacular natural resources that can support a robust tourism industry; we are ever vigilant in protecting those resources. Land Use Planning plays a vital role in protecting those natural resource lands, but it should also foster economic growth tailored to the unique landscape and population within each region of the State, while recognizing those vast differences that exist throughout the State, are the very characteristics that makes us attractive to so many.

It is extremely difficult for use to compete with many of our neighboring counties for industries that rely on some form of transportation to move products as well as the increased utility carrying capacity, both of which we do not enjoy. One size does not fit all; especially when we try to compare a county of 1500 people/square mile and composed of prime farmland to a county with a total population of 1,500 with less than one person/square mile and has little to no prime farmland let alone a completed soils study from NRCS.

Urban sprawl is not a problem in Eastern Oregon. In fact, our decline of population continues to contribute to less and less commercial goods and services being offered. There is no single industry that can be relied upon to bring additional population to the County, however, we have a strong demand for small, buildable parcels that families can live a self-sustaining lifestyle while working in a telecommuting capacity. Unfortunately, the land use rules meant to preserve prime agricultural lands are the same rules that are strangling the small, remote populations of this State. We would urge the State to afford all communities a level playing field and have some self-control without a constant hand out.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Hunt-Thompson
Wheeler County Planning Director

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick C. Perry
Wheeler County Court Judge



Bill Harvey
Commission Chair
bharvey@bakercounty.org

Oregon State Senate
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Tim L. Kerns
Commissioner
tkerns@bakercounty.org

RE: Senate Bill 25

Dear Committee Members,

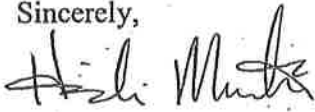
Mark Bennett
Commissioner
mbennett@bakercounty.org

I am writing this letter in support of Senate Bill 25. We try as much as we can to improve the economy in Baker County. Having some more flexibility in our land use laws would open up other possibilities for new development.

We, here in Baker County, spend large amounts of money and time to recruit new industries to our area. Not having the ability to offer large tracts of property for these projects have us at a disadvantage. It would help greatly having some flexibility in zoning. We have worked endlessly at keeping our Comprehensive Land Use Plan up to date at all times. By bringing in a manufacturing company, this would in turn bring in customers to an exciting business to better stabilize our local economy here in our county.

Thank you so much for the possibility of realigning our land use planning.

Sincerely,

for 

William Harvey, Chairman
Baker County Board of Commissioners