



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON

March 19, 2015

Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Senator Richard Devlin and Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-chairs
Members of the Committee
WaysandMeans.NaturalResourcesSub@state.or.us

Re: HB 5027 – Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) - COMMENTS

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots nonpartisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League first studied land use in 1959 and has been active since in supporting our statewide land use planning program with local implementation. We believe that Goal 1 requires open access to the land use process and that all citizens have a stake in the development of their communities.

The League believes this department is critical to the health and wellbeing of Oregonians. As we plan our cities and counties, we are deciding where we will all live, work, shop, play and how we'll get there. Planning determines what kind of infrastructure communities will need. It helps assure our natural areas are protected and we have not only economically vital agricultural and forest lands, but lands for other industrial uses. (Page 3 of the DLCD slide presentation is a wonderful visual of the important part this agency plays in our daily lives.) We pointed out during the Department of Agriculture's budget presentation that agriculture represents a relatively stable 15% of our economy. With the ability to diversify, assuring these lands are available for a variety of future agricultural uses is critical to feeding not only Oregon, but the world. The League is proud to have been part of the many voices that helped assure that our current vineyard lands on the hills around the Willamette Valley were ready for that relatively new agriculture use back in the 1970s.

You have heard of the importance of local government grant monies because it is those grants that help pay for public engagement in local planning efforts. We support POP 101 to fund local planning efforts by local communities. We also want to be sure that DLCD maintains field staff around the state to help local communities with local planning needs. But we are not supportive of POP 109 that would add two new "alignment coordinators" to the agency budget. Similar to the one in the Department of Agriculture's budget, these positions would be housed in the Governor's office. We have a statewide program with local implementation. Instead of adding these positions (and a lead person directly in the Governor's office budget), we recommend this committee and others address the very serious need for local government funding, including addressing the funding challenges and unequal taxation that has been created by Property Tax Measures 5 and 47/50.

We support work on their data system, POP 104, so long as the intent of gathering information from among agencies helps all agencies and local governments do their work more efficiently and with better outcomes. Coordination and data sharing needs to be the key to these data systems. We were pleased to hear even more shared services are occurring among natural resource agencies.

We believe that DLCD needs enough money in its budget to "hire" Attorney General services when violations of the system rise to the level of state concern.

As a part of the 2009 transportation package, an agreement was reached to also work on voluntary greenhouse gas reduction ideas with our Metropolitan Planning Organizations so we support continuation of POP 106. Other Metropolitan Organizations are working on their plans as Metro considers adoption of theirs.

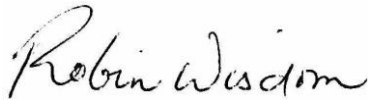
Having a person housed at DLCDC to help with natural hazards planning is really important as we deal with more and varied disasters. We are supportive of HB 2633 related to natural hazards rulemaking and support POP 107 to work on this public safety issue. The amended bill should set parameters—sideboards—but the hard work will be done by rulemaking and then on-the-ground local implementation. That effort must have broad involvement by a wide variety of stakeholders, other agencies and citizens. Involvement costs money.

We understand the importance of working on “Sage-Con”, so believe that POP 108 will continue the good work being done by the counties and citizens in those six counties where the listing of sage grouse could severely affect those local economies.

There has been much discussion about the role of the Regional Solutions Teams during this presentation. The League continues to follow this program as it expands and has increasing influence around the state. Our focus has been on assuring that Oregon citizens know about the program, the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RAC) membership and meetings and assuring a provision for public comment as these Committees set “regional priorities” and expend state money and staff time on “regional projects”. We support Regional Solutions Teams so long as their work is open and citizen driven. We are very concerned that RACs are doing priority-setting without a full community discussion. And state monies and staff are expended without full legislative oversight.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Robin Wisdom
President



Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator

Cc: Richard Whitman, Governor’s Natural Resources Policy Director
Jim Rue, Director of DLCDC
Carrie Maclaren, Deputy Director of DLCDC