

From: Chuck Humphreys [<mailto:chuckinsisters@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2015 9:46 AM
To: Reiley Beth
Subject: Senate Bill 748

I would appreciate it if you would please put these comments into the public record, as well as distribute them to Senate Environment and Natural Resource Committee.

As someone who worked on economic development issues my entire professional career, I can appreciate the concern and the effort to find ways to stimulate economies and create jobs. There are some places in Oregon where the situation is clearly worrisome. Thus, the objectives of the proposed bill are laudable.

At the same time, I have worked extensively on public policy, including analyzing the intended and unintended consequences of well-meaning public policy. I believe that the public policy defined by this bill is, quite simply, bad public policy. It mistakenly assumes that economic doldrums are the result of land use laws that were created to protect and enhance the public good -- including the conservation of a wide array of natural resources that belong to all of us, not just to potential employers. By eviscerating these well-established land use laws, this bill would put us on the road to undermining many of the qualities that make Oregon a place where people want to live, invest, and raise their families. Oregon's land use laws are a major reason my family moved here, brought our wealth and our income to spend in Oregon. Otherwise we would have moved to states like Vermont. Blaming poor economic performance on land use laws that preserve the positive qualities of our state also reflects a profound misunderstanding of what creates economic growth, of who creates jobs, and of what they really need to create jobs. This bill is not only poor public policy, it is also bad economics.

But even if land use laws could somehow be credited with sluggish economic growth, the proposed provisions are so loosely defined as to merit being labeled sophomoric. One of the lessons of any analysis of public policy is that they have to be carefully targeted (based on a good understanding of an economy), crisply and narrowly defined, easy to monitor and enforce, and with measurable and enduring benefits that outweigh the inevitable costs and distortions of any policy, good or bad.

I would urge the Committee to reject or table this proposed bill -- it is bad economics, bad public policy, and bad for Oregonians.

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