



ORCA: Oregon Coast Alliance

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Protecting the Oregon Coast

April 13, 2015

Beth Reiley, Administrator
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Legislature
Salem, OR

Re: SB 748

Sent via email: beth.reiley@state.or.us

Dear Chair Edwards and members of the Committee,

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is an Oregon nonprofit corporation whose mission is to protect and restore the coast's natural resources, and work with residents to maintain livability. We write today in strong opposition to SB 748, a transparent effort to destroy the land use planning system by creating a lax, sloppily defined means of "opting out" of the land use Goals based on high unemployment, lack of growth or high poverty levels in a County.

At least 23 of Oregon's counties would qualify under the broad, vague definitions in this bill, probably including all five coastal counties: Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Coos and Curry. All five have historically low employment levels and/or little or no growth.

The coast's natural resources would suffer dramatically if this bill were to become law. It is critically important on the coast that development occur in areas away from tsunami danger, sand cliff erosion, wetlands, beaches and dunes and similar natural hazards in which the coast abounds. It is the land use laws that provide the template for safe development zones, through the Goals, Comprehensive Plan framework and zoning regulations.

Furthermore, SB 748 has the most absurd standard: that ten jobs, if created, would trigger the opportunity for a county to get out of the land use system. There is no requirement in the bill that the jobs be permanent, nor is there any method for proving that jobs have actually *been* created to meet the threshold.

SB 748 assumes that growth is a universal economic good, but it is not. In many areas, additional population growth ruins livability or strains ecosystems or key resources such as water supply, to the breaking point. It is not good policy to promote growth at the cost of other goods. Insufficient resources is a common problem on the coast, where sewer and septic infrastructure is small scale and infrequently upgraded. Also, most if not all rivers and streams on the coast are fully appropriated for the dry summer months – there is no further water available.

Furthermore, retaining farmland on the coast is essential to industries ranging from dairy farming to ranching, cranberry bogs, blueberries and vineyards. There are also thousands of acres of lush forestland in the Coast Range that need to be protected from rural development in order to produce wood fiber on a commercial scale.

SB 748 would jeopardize all these economic drivers for the coastal region. We urge the Committee to reject this transparent and very poorly-drafted attempt to break the land use system in Oregon and solve rural economic troubles by means that have no proven efficacy or even relationship to unemployment and poverty. The land use system does not kill jobs: it creates and maintains them in many industries that are recession-proof and stable for the communities that depend on them.

Please enter this testimony into the record on this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Cameron La Follette

Cameron La Follette
Executive Director