



February 7, 2016

Chair Sara Gensler
Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
900 Court Street NE, S-405
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 1533 and 1575 Regarding the Provision of Affordable Housing

PO Box 1544
Hood River
Oregon
97031

www.hrvrc.org

President
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Board Members
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Larry Martin
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Executive Director
Heather Staten

Administrative Assistant
Kristyn Fix

Dear Chair Gensler and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood:

Hood River Valley Residents Committee submits this testimony in support of SB 1533 and in opposition to SB 1575. Hood River Valley Residents Committee (HRVRC) is one of Oregon's oldest local land use advocacy groups. Since 1977, our mission has been to protect Hood River County's farms, forests, special wild places and the livability of our urban areas.

Affordable housing is not just a big city problem; it is an issue that desirable communities of all sizes across Oregon must grapple with. It is certainly an issue in Hood River County where escalating home costs--and market forces that favor construction of high-end homes-- have made our community increasingly unaffordable for working folks. Affordable housing is a complex issue and it will take complex solutions. There is no silver bullet. It will take a combination of policies, incentives and private and public partnerships to address affordable housing effectively. Inclusionary Zoning should be one of the tools available to local governments. HRVRC supports removing the local pre-emption on Inclusionary Zoning and recommends passage of SB 1533.

However, HRVRC does not support SB 1575. The bill weakens Oregon's Urban Growth Boundary system but is unlikely to make a dent in the affordable housing crisis it is purportedly trying to address. Our UBG system is designed to create compact and efficient cities that reduce local government costs for roads and infrastructure while protecting farmland for commercial agriculture. That system has been a great success in Hood River County. In our county, the likely effects of SB 1575 would be to burden the City of Hood River with increased infrastructure costs, permanently remove some of America's best farmland from production and make very little progress on affordable housing. HRVRC strongly opposes SB 1575 and we urge you to reject it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these bills.

Best regards,

Heather Staten
Executive Director