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February 9, 2016

Senator Lee Beyer
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St.
Salem, OR

Re: SB 1588, Allows Rural County with No Population Growth, and Other Local Governments and County, to Adopt Comprehensive Land Use Plan without Complying with Statewide Land Use Planning Goals - Oppose

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony against SB 1588 which would allow rural counties with no population growth, and other local governments in the county, to adopt comprehensive land use plans without complying with statewide land use planning goals. Central Oregon LandWatch respectfully opposes this bill because it undermines Oregon's long-standing land use system which has been so important both as a support to our economy and the natural resources necessary for that economy.

Central Oregon LandWatch is a non-profit organization which has for 30 years advocated for protection of natural resources, for support of livable communities and for compliance with Oregon's land use system in Central Oregon. We work regularly with Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson County farmers and ranchers to protect farmland/rangeland.

The underlying premise for this bill is apparently the supposition that Oregon's land use system is somehow causing a lack of economic and population growth in these counties. There is no basis for that assumption. Where is the data that would show that developments don't happen in those counties because of land use rules? The challenges to rural counties can be seen across the West, including in counties without land use rules.

In fact, it is our land use laws that protect farm and forest lands which are mainstays of economies in rural Oregon. While the intention to help rural counties is a good one, that is not achieved by blaming what is actually a benefit to those counties.



Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Dewey,
Executive Director

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