



Making Great Communities Happen

February 10, 2016

Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
 Senator Lee Beyer, Chair
 900 Court Street NE
 Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Testimony from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association on SB 1588

Chair Beyer and Members of the Senate Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) is an independent, statewide, not-for-profit educational organization with 850 members that provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in community planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to meet the challenges of growth and change.

SB 1588 would allow Counties (or local governments with 51 percent of the population in the County) with a population of less than 50,000 that has not grown since the previous federal decennial census to adopt a comprehensive land use plan without complying with statewide planning goals. The Counties that would qualify today are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Population, Oregon and Counties with a population less than 50,000, 2000 and 2010

	2000	2010	2000-10 Change	
			Number	Percent
OREGON	3,421,399	3,831,074	409,675	12.0%
Wheeler County	1,547	1,441	-106	-6.9%
Sherman County	1,934	1,765	-169	-8.7%
Gilliam County	1,915	1,871	-44	-2.3%
Wallowa County	7,226	7,008	-218	-3.0%
Harney County	7,609	7,422	-187	-2.5%
Grant County	7,935	7,445	-490	-6.2%
Baker County	16,741	16,134	-607	-3.6%
Malheur County	31,615	31,313	-302	-1.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990, 2000, and 2010, PSU Population Research Center, www.pdx.edu/prc

For the following reasons OAPA recommends a **“Do Not Pass”** recommendation from the Committee.

- **There is no evidence that compliance with statewide planning goals impede economic development.** This is a solution looking for a problem. Simply put, no connection has been shown that the statewide planning goals are impeding economic development and job creation in rural Oregon counties with a population of less than 50,000.

- **Good planning can lead to economic growth.** Part of the statewide planning Goal 9 (Economy) effort is to identify economic development opportunities for the community, thus assisting the community in focusing its efforts. Central Oregon cities and counties, all of which have acknowledged comprehensive plans, have experienced job creation, economic development and business expansion.
- **The legislation would likely lead to loss of funding sources for planning.** The Counties listed in Table 1 have limited resources for planning. It is highly unlikely the state would provide grant funds to adopt a comprehensive plan that does not comply with the statewide goals. It's questionable if Counties with limited resources would commit those resources to revising their comprehensive plan.

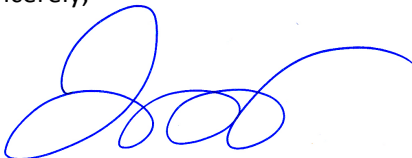
Great communities are no accident—they were planned that way. Oregon has many laws that are intended to ensure communities think comprehensively and long term about the decisions and the investments they make today and the impact they will have on future generations.

OAPA recognizes that many planning and development issues are location and context specific. While all cities and counties must comply with the applicable 19 statewide planning goals, Oregon's planning laws contain a wide range of provisions that accommodate differences in geography, economy, size of jurisdiction, environment, as well as cultural and political differences. Furthermore, the needs, approaches and feasibility of land use policies and implementation approaches will differ – in some cases significantly – across unincorporated areas, cities, metro areas, counties and regions. In Oregon, these differences are reflected in the plans produced locally. For example, Malheur County's Comprehensive Plan is much different than that of Multnomah County's.

What makes these plans successful is a thorough understanding of the perspectives, population characteristics, institutions, and employers in each community and the local and national forces that are shaping where people live and work, and how they move and communicate. It is important that a plan incorporates information about the needs and desires of local stakeholders. For example, Oregon's agricultural economy is one of the strongest in the country, due in part because of our statewide planning goals that protect agricultural lands and the regulations that make it easier to farm. Similarly, Oregon's growing technology sector is being driven in part by the availability of mixed-use, multi-modal and sustainable urban areas being sought by educated millennials across the nation. Oregon's statewide land use goals help to support economic development in Oregon's rural communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,



Jeannine Rustad, President
Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association