



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

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Making Great Communities Happen

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Joint Committee of Ways and Means; Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative Witt
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association testimony regarding SB 5527:
Funding for the Department of Land Conservation and Development**

Dear Co- Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative Witt, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means; Subcommittee on Natural Resources,

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.

OAPA supports SB 5527 to fund the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) but does not believe the funding levels proposed in the Governor's budget are adequate for the work the Department is statutorily required to do, nor adequate the support the critical work of city, county, and regional governments to conduct planning work across the state through DLCD grants.

For the reasons explained below, OAPA requests that DLCD make the following changes TO SB 5527:

- **Hold the DLCD budget constant with the 2015-17 biennium** (an increase of approximately \$866,000 from the 2017-19 Governor's proposed budget) for staffing purposes. With a staff of just 56 or so people, any cuts take away critical services to local government.
- **Restore the approximately \$80,000 in planning assistance grants.** Additionally, remove the refocus of technical assistance grants on coastal natural hazard planning, mitigation and resilience and allow such grants to be used throughout the state. Such grants are necessary not only to address coastal resiliency efforts, but also to issues related to housing, economic development, transportation, farm and forestland issues.
- **Fund the Policy Package that would fund two full-time positions, one at the DLCD and one at the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OCHS).** Communities around the state are experiencing a shortage of affordable housing. Many local jurisdictions have outdated housing plans that can hinder residential development. These positions would

align technical resources from DLCD and OCHS to improve planning for housing, including much needed zoning and code updates. This work would help reduce development and increase the production of housing.

DLCD is one of the smallest state agencies where even small reductions in funding have serious consequences in staff's ability to do critical work. Its staff must ensure that the 36 counties and 242 cities comprehensive plans and land use planning activities comply with the 19 statewide land use goals. These plans are critical to ensure Oregonians can continue to support and build great communities. This is done by ensuring that land use plans are coordinated to provide for efficient public services. In addition, land use planning work is critical to address many of the most pressing needs in Oregon today, including:

- **The provision of needed housing:** Communities across the state must plan for a 20-year supply of needed housing. Many cash-strapped cities rely on technical assistance grants from DLCD to plan for needed housing and conduct the analysis required to expand UGBs and plan for the efficient provision of infrastructure. The loss of these grant funds and the DLCD staff to support this work would result in unnecessary delays and an exacerbate the lack of affordable housing across the state.
- **Coordination of land use and transportation:** The Oregon Legislature is working hard to craft and pass a much needed transportation passage. Coordination of land use is critical to ensure that it supports public transit, plans for safe routes for people walking and biking, as well as those driving cars, and manages the movement of freight and other goods. Technical assistance grants provide an important source of funds to ensure that land use planning is coordinated with transportation improvements to maximize their benefits for all residents.
- **Planning for economic development:** Cities and counties efforts to plan for commercial and industrial employment areas is essential to ensure robust job growth in urban and rural communities across the state.
- **Update comprehensive plans:** Every city and county must comply with Oregon's statewide land use goals, however, very few cities have the resources to update all sections of their plans on a regular basis. This has resulted in portions of plans being woefully out of date (some not updated since their original acknowledgement in the 1970s and 1980s). This leaves communities ill prepared to address crisis when it happens, or take advantage of opportunities (such as new employers coming to town).

Good planning is necessary to build great communities. It is also critical to good governance and we all have a responsibility to support it.

Sincerely,



Jeannine Rustad, JD, President
Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association