

Chair Clem and members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

I am a resident of Sisters Oregon and am unable to attend this week's hearing on these two bills in person. Please accept this email as my testimony, and add it into the record for both cases.

In my view, House bills 2893 and 2894 would make our land use laws worse rather than better for the following reasons.

House Bill 2893:

Currently lands consisting primarily of Class VI soils are reclassified as Class III soils (high value farmland in Central and Eastern Oregon) if those soils are or can be subject to irrigation.

House Bill 2893, however, would make no distinction between non irrigated and irrigated Class VI soils. It treats both types of class VI soils just the same. Accordingly, high value irrigated farmlands which are currently actively engaged in agricultural activity would be placed in the first priority category (the same category as non resource lands) when they are chosen as part of the study area for inclusion in the urban growth boundary.

Both current law and stated legislative policy protects all high value irrigated farmland in Oregon from urban development to the fullest extent possible. House Bill 2893 is a stealth attack on current law and on that legislative policy. By the simple expedient of never mentioning irrigation, or its effects on moving Class VI soils to high value farmland, House bill 2893 seeks to create an end run around our current land use laws and statewide policies.

House Bill 2894:

House Bill 2894 would allow cities outside of the Metro area to reexamine lands already within their urban growth boundaries to "make a determination as to the likelihood that an area of land will be developed or redeveloped for housing purposes within the planning period." If by any "objective criteria" any of the lands already within the city's urban growth boundary are determined to be unlikely to be developed or redeveloped during the planning period "to accommodate estimated housing needs", the city may totally exclude that area from its analysis." And one of the listed objective criteria is "cost" alone.

Plainly and simply, this is an anti-infill provision. In practice, House Bill 2894 would allow cities to treat lands outside of their current urban growth boundaries preferentially over lands already within its urban growth boundaries simply because it would be easier and less costly to expand outward than to infill.

Accordingly, and contrary to both existing law and this legislature's own stated policy, this bill would encourage urban sprawl not only in Central and Eastern Oregon, but also in the Willamette Valley and all across Oregon outside the Metro area.

Governor McCall must be spinning in his grave.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns with these two bills.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by email at judgelipscomb@gmail.com, or by phone at 503-551-7272.

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