

Statement Supporting SB 258 and SB 114

To: Senate Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources

From: Holly Bendixen, Philomath resident and homeowner

Date: March 31, 2017

We have lived in Philomath, Oregon for 37 years and have been involved in our community as a volunteer for all of these years. I was a member of the Water & Sewer Commission for 5 years, the Parks Commission for 2 and several other committees. I have recently been involved with planning to ensure that we have reasonable and sustainable growth. In talking with neighbors, I have found overwhelming consensus on this goal. In order to accomplish it, residents must be able to vote on proposed annexations, which impact everyone in the community in terms of both quality of life and finances. Therefore, SB 258 and/or SB 114 **must be passed** so that residents can continue to shape the ongoing development and growth of the communities they call home. This needs to be a right of the people. We also have this as part of our city charter and “home rule” needs to be supported. The passing of SB 1573 was unjust and did not take into account the rights of the citizens.

SB 258/114 must be passed as soon as possible:

1. The rights of all citizens need to be respected- not just lobbyists for homebuilders and realtors. We live here, raise families and pay taxes. Our quality of life is impacted not the developers who make a quick profit and then leave.
2. Resources and infrastructure may not exist to support proposed annexations, and may not be able to be built in a reasonable length of time (if ever). SB 1573 will not increase the supply of affordable housing. Again using a local example, there are already many undeveloped home sites in Philomath which could be devoted to affordable housing, but this is not happening. The demand does not exist for a massive amount of residential development here, as there are not sufficient local jobs and people do not want to commute in the heavy traffic. To create affordable housing will require an integrated effort of government and local communities to assure not just houses/apartments, but also employment, transportation, education, and other infrastructure. SB 1573 is a simplistic approach to a complex problem, and will never work. It will accomplish only more money to special interests, while adding to community costs and problems that actually stand in the way of more affordable housing.
3. SB 1573 sets a dangerous precedent in allowing the State Legislature to interfere with the home rule embodied in city charters. The Oregon Constitution wisely prohibits the Legislature from forcing cities to amend or repeal their charters. It is imperative that the Legislature respects and upholds voter rights by repealing SB 1573.

Voters across Oregon will be severely adversely affected unless SB 1573 is repealed. Therefore, I strongly urge you to pass SB 258 and/or SB 114 to accomplish this goal. Thank you for your consideration.