

Senator Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

Please accept this email as my testimony in opposition to SB 608, SB 612, and SB 618. I live in Central Oregon and cannot attend the hearing on April 6th.

It appears to me that these bills are simply this legislative session's assault on our system of land use planning in Oregon. Each session some attempts to weaken Oregon's land use laws seem to find their way into bill form. Typically these bills never go anywhere, but the threats posed to our agricultural lands and rural culture are very real and can never be safely ignored. Usually, such bills are dressed up as an attempt to alleviate some currently topical issue such as housing (SB 608), unemployment (SB 612), or rural emigration (SB 432 and SB 602).

But not always. This session SB 618 proposes to allow local governments to waive any and all statewide land use goals by simply declaring "a land use emergency" of no particular specificity. (Interestingly, SB 618 itself declares its passage to be a legislative "emergency" of no particular specificity other than it is "necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health and safety.") If for nothing else, SB 618 is remarkable for its candor. It makes no attempt at all to disguise its objective of subverting Oregon's land use laws.

Please see that none of these bills make it out of committee. They are all bad bills aimed at weakening Oregon's land use laws; land use laws that are continuing to work well throughout this state to preserve our agricultural lands and to discourage urban sprawl.

Thank you,

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