



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

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Making Great Communities Happen

April 5, 2017

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association testimony to the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources in opposition to SB 432.

Dear Chair Dembrow and members of the 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 432 would allow counties with a population of less than 50,000 that have 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 Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, Wallowa, Harney, Grant, Baker and Malheur.¹

Our organization has reviewed SB 432 and oppose the bill as drafted. For the following reasons, **we respectfully ask that the Committee not pass it out of 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 leads to economic growth.** Part of the statewide planning Goal 9 (Economy) effort is to identify economic develop 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. In addition, Goal 11 (Public Facilities and Services) requires that areas within UGBs with a population of 2,500 or more to develop public facility plans for water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure to support forecasted economic growth.

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990, 2000, and 2010, PSU Population Research Center, www.pdx.edu/prc

- **The legislation would likely lead to loss of funding sources for planning.** The Counties listed in Table 1 have limited resources for planning. The Governor’s proposed budget does not include technical assistance grants from the Department of Land Conservation and Development for planning (other than coastal resiliency planning). It’s questionable if Counties with limited resources would commit those resources to revising their comprehensive plan.

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 Multnomah County’s Comprehensive Plan.

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. 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, JD, President
Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association