



American Planning Association  
**Oregon Chapter**

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*Making Great Communities Happen*

April 4, 2017

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
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 regarding SB 612

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members,

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.

Our organization has reviewed SB 612 and opposes the bill. **We respectfully ask that the Committee not pass this bill out of committee** for the following reasons:

SB 612 is an economic development policy, not a goal exception. Exceptions to the statewide planning goals are generally needed when a proposal seeks to amend a local government's comprehensive plan. Typically, an amendment to an acknowledged plan requires that the amendment be consistent with the statewide planning goals. In some very limited cases, a proposal may qualify for an exception to one or more of the goals. Previous legislators intended for the exception program to be limited. That intent is evident in the very definition of exception; a special case, an irregularity, or an anomaly.

Job creation is welcomed by the OAPA. However, what SB 612 would do is create an exception to the statewide planning goals that would be generally applicable across the state and has a very low threshold — the creation of just five jobs— the antithesis of an exception. OAR 660-004-0005(1)(a) defines an exception as being “applicable to specific properties or situations and does not establish a planning or zoning policy of general applicability.” OAPA respects the intent of SB 612 to the extent that it encourages economic investment in depressed areas. However, an expansion to goal exceptions in favor of economic development is not the right approach.

For these reasons, OAPA asks the Committee to not pass SB 612.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeannine Rustad', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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