



American Planning Association
Oregon Chapter

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Making Great Communities Happen

April 25, 2017

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association testimony on HB 2316 regarding buildable land analyses for cities with populations of less than 25,000.

Dear Chair Dembrow and Senate Committee Members,

Please accept the following testimony in support of HB 2316 on behalf of the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA).

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.

As planners, we believe that cities of all sizes face the complex challenges associated with growth and change and that it is therefore critical that all cities make use of Oregon's planning tools. For this reason, OAPA supports the adoption of HB 2316, which would require a city with a population of less than 25,000 to determine its estimated housing needs for a 20-year period, inventory the supply of buildable land within its growth boundary, and adopt measures to meet those housing needs.

Conducting periodic housing needs analyses and inventorying buildable land helps ensure that a city can accommodate anticipated growth. If it is determined that future demand may exceed current supply, changes to the urban growth boundary (UGB) may need to be made, as well as the adoption of efficiency measures, such as up-zoning to allow higher-density development. This important planning process helps combat housing affordability issues by anticipating the dueling forces of supply and demand.

While the issue of housing affordability is a dominating one in large urban areas, it is not confined to larger cities. Housing affordability is a significant issue in smaller cities and rural areas as well, as data recently released by the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis suggests. Economist Josh Lehner noted, "A portion of rural communities face significant affordability


challenges that are every bit as severe as some of the popular metropolitan areas.”¹ Lechner also found that, relative to other rural areas in the U.S., many rural areas in Oregon have experienced population growth as opposed to decline. This is putting increasing pressure on the existing housing stock making these places less affordable.

The crisis of housing affordability must be tackled from all sides, including addressing the issue in both in cities of all sizes. All cities should periodically examine their housing needs and determine whether they are in a position to accommodate future growth or if they need to make amendments in order to do so. OAPA is thus in favor of HB 2316 and encourages its adoption.

OAPA also wants to take this opportunity to stress the importance of financial and technical assistance that will be needed to support this work. Many small cities in Oregon have a staff of one planner, and in some cases rely on the city manager to conduct planning work. To achieve the results sought under HB 2316, the State will need to ensure technical resources and grants can be made available to small cities to assist them in completing this vital work. OAPA has already supported SB 5527, the budget appropriations bill for the Department of Land Conservation and Development, and the appropriation of additional funds for local government planning grants.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill. OAPA recommends the committee pass the bill with a Do Pass recommendation.

Sincerely,



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

¹ Lechner, Josh. “Rural Housing Affordability.” Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, Feb. 9, 2017.