



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp to Oppose SB 334:

Proposed Legislation to Site Low-Income Households Housing on UGB Edge Detrimental to Target Population and Community as a Whole

Scheduled for public hearing on March 11, 2019, before
the Senate Committee On Housing

Chair Fagan, Vice-Chair Heard and Members of the Committee:

As one of Oregon’s fastest growing communities for the past 20 years—doubling in population to over 25,000 during that timeframe—the City of Wilsonville has become very familiar with housing developments of all types. In fact, 50% of our residents live in single-family homes and 50% live in multi-family housing—a higher percentage of residents live in multi-family communities in Wilsonville than even in the City of Portland.

As a home-rule municipality with carefully crafted urban growth plans, the City of Wilsonville opposes the preemptions of SB 334 as poor public policy that is detrimental to both lower-income residents and the community as a whole and deprives the City of negotiating capacity.

The proposed legislation would site “workforce housing” locations for “moderate * * * or low income households” on the urban growth boundary (UGB) edge. This kind of policy harms both the intended beneficiaries of such a policy—lower-income residents seeking affordable housing—and the greater community.

The City believe that it is poor public policy to site affordable housing on the UGB edge due to the general lack of public transit service and no ready-access to key commercial retail and social services that are generally located toward the city core areas. Rather, affordable housing should be located near or in the heart of the city along transit corridors and near commercial retail and social services needed by lower-income residents.


Placing affordable housing on the UGB edge forces lower-income residents to spend limited financial resources on operating a vehicle to travel distance, or make cumbersome alternative transportation arrangements. In essence, congregating affordable housing into low-income housing projects on the UGB edge appears to be a policy favoring the creation of “suburban slums” that harm all residents of a community.

The City objects to the preemption that requires local governments, upon petition by a landowner, to include land designated as urban reserves within the UGB. The reality of development, however, is that the City and landowner often negotiate regarding potential land-uses and other infrastructure issues prior to UGB addition or annexation occurring.

Additionally, the City has obligations to the Metro region for Urban Reserve areas as part of the conditions for acquiring new UGB areas that this type of language would seem to preempt.

The City respectfully urges the committee to take no action on SB 334. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Tim Knapp, Mayor
City of Wilsonville