

Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager
On House Bill 2001, -11 amendment
House Committee Human Services and Housing
April 3, 2019



Metro is the regional government for the greater Portland metropolitan area, tasked by Oregon statute with preparing population and growth forecasts for the region every six years, and making decisions about how and where the region will grow. Our region has a strong track record of supporting the core purposes of Oregon's statewide planning system – protecting farms and forests and providing additional room for growth when needed.

In recent years, we have worked with our partners to improve how we do this work, supporting local efforts to make the most of existing land, adopting a 50-year plan for urban and rural reserves, requiring concept planning to ensure that UGB expansions will result in needed housing, and making continuous improvements to our technical analyses that support growth management decisions. In its most recent growth management decision in 2018, the Metro Council added four well-planned areas to the UGB as proposed by four cities in the region.

Metro strongly supports the goal of HB 2001 to increase the availability of “middle housing.” In fact, in its recent growth management decision, the Metro Council included conditions of approval requiring the four cities responsible for planning those areas to allow the same types of housing that will be allowed under HB 2001.

However, we have some concerns regarding recent amendments in Sections 5 and 6 of the -11 amendment that make fairly significant changes to Metro's methodology for forecasting population growth and future housing needs. These changes are not required to achieve the underlying purpose of the bill. We have several areas of concern, but two key issues are highlighted below:

- Separation of capacity and need analyses: Section 5 (5)(a) of the amendment removes housing need from the analysis in that section, and removes the requirement that Metro consider demographic and population trends and economic trends and cycles from both the capacity and need analyses. This creates an artificial compartmentalization of the consideration of supply and demand, which are inherently related.
- Addition of race and gender to forecast requirements for future housing needs: Section 6 (2) of the amendment creates a new list of factors that must be considered by a city or Metro for estimating future housing need. Metro already considers most of those factors under existing law; however, the amendment adds race and gender to the future (need-oriented) demographic factors. While Metro strongly supports racial and gender equity in policy making, we know of no current forecast model in the US that uses race and gender as part of a housing distribution analysis. The only way Metro could defensibly project gender and race in a housing context using existing technology is to assume that past distributions of those characteristics remain consistent into the future. This raises concerns about equity, since carrying the past forward will perpetuate past injustices.

We look forward to the opportunity to work on limited revisions to the -11 amendments that will resolve our concerns as the bill moves forward.