

From: [Bill Atherton](#)
To: [JCT Exhibits](#)
Subject: HB2015 opposition testimony
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2019 3:00:09 PM

Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

I am writing now to ask your “no” vote on HB2015 (drivers licenses for illegal aliens).

Certainly you will hear citizens express concerns on everything from public safety, to legitimizing illegal immigration, to devaluing US citizenship. No doubt you are getting an earful about ignoring Oregon voters since they rejected this idea in a referendum just a few years ago. I will not even bring up the hushed and cynical analysis of many that this is really about one political party looking for cheap votes and big industry looking for cheap labor.

All these concerns are valid... but I would argue they miss what the hubbub on immigration is really about: Population growth and exceeding the “carrying capacity” of this wonderful Oregon.

I offer an alternative analysis based on this profound fact: The people of this country – and the state of Oregon – through their personal decisions have expressed collective natural wisdom declaring we have already reached “carrying capacity”. How did they do this? By taking a multitude of economic, resource and personal factors into consideration our citizens have been maintaining replacement level fertility... since 1973!

One would think this message, that the country is, to use President Trump’s recent words, “Filled up”, would be listened to. Unfortunately, perhaps disastrously, it has been ignored.

Yes, we might suspect the president did not reach this conclusion by reading detailed policy papers such as the 1972 report of the Commission on Population Growth And The American Future, or the 1975 paper by renowned demographer Kingsley Davis given to the California Assembly on a Population Policy for California. How President Trump blurts out this profound truth is beyond me.

The important point is our fellow citizens have continued this unambiguous message for the past 46 years!

If the know-it-alls in Washington, DC had listened, they would have held immigration to the historic level of around 200,000 per year – not an inconsequential level and more than any other country on this planet. At that level US population would have stabilized at 235 million by now.

Instead, legal and illegal immigration numbers have been allowed to balloon to 2 million per year. 200,000 worked. Ten times that number is crushing. US population is now over 335 million and growing at a rate that could double in our children’s or grand-children’s lifetimes.

Do not ignore this message. Do not be swayed by greedy special interests or know-it-all elites. Listen to the wisdom of the people who must live with these decisions.

HB 2015 might seem insignificant in the scheme of things, but I would argue this is a grand opportunity to do genuine measures for our long term prosperity and well being. Here's how:

1. Reject HB 2015 by voting "no". Maintain the voter's desire to at least get a start controlling illegal immigration.
2. Place a legislative initiative on the 2020 ballot to ask our citizens this basic question about "carrying capacity": Should the State of Oregon stop promoting population growth with taxpayer subsidies or reducing the level or quality of services like education, protecting air and water quality or transportation facilities? Yes or no. Up or down. And do this vote on a scheduled periodicity such as every 10 years. Let's have a meaningful conversation with meaningful consequences. Provide a listing of all the actions the state must take based on the vote. If voters say "no", then keep doing what you are doing. If they say "yes" then change our ways. For example, stop interfering in local decisions on land use planning such as requiring – rather than allowing – a twenty year supply of land inside urban growth boundaries. Or another, allow communities to charge the full costs of growth with System Development Charges rather than prohibiting SDCs for police, fire, library and school facilities. Listen to the wisdom of Oregon's citizens.
3. Stop this obscene rush to the path of least resistance allowing employment of illegal aliens. Require use of e-verify in Oregon. And, for real impact, let's invest in our own citizens, especially the ignored or down-and-out. We could start by allowing counties – since they are already agents of the state for social services – to be day labor operators. Develop a process to allow counties to organize useful employment for the quasi-disabled, those with mental or behavioral problems, and young people. Instead of street-corner pickup sites for people in the country illegally, take meaningful steps to integrate our own citizens into communities in ways that benefit them and the community.

We can do these things. Don't waste time, effort, taxpayer dollars on measures like HB 2015. Listen to the citizens and do important work on this whole question of immigration, population growth and carrying capacity. Start by voting "no" on HB 2015.

Thank you.

Bill Atherton