

MJCONSER TESTIMONY ABOUT OREGON DECOUPLING FROM FEDERAL OPPORTUNITY ZONES
02/06/2020

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I'M A 6TH GENERATION OREGONIAN.

MY GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER JACOB CONSER FOUNDED JEFFERSON, OREGON, JUST SOUTH OF HERE ON THE SANTIAM RIVER IN 1848.

IN THE 1800'S THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFERED HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO OWN AND DEVELOP LAND IN OREGON. THAT PROGRAM GRANTED HIM A "DONATION LAND CLAIM" ON WHICH HE PROCEEDED TO DEVELOP THE TOWN OF JEFFERSON OREGON.

FROM THAT HE BUILT "THE FIRST RAILROAD ADDITION TO THE CITY OF JEFFERSON"

THE FIRST FERRY ACROSS THE SANTIAM RIVER, THE FIRST CITY STREETS, THE FIRST MODERN HOMES.

"THAT WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD" BECAME A CITY. AN ORGANIZED PLACE FOR COMMERCE, SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN, HOUSES OF WORSHIP, ETC.

HE WAS A RISK TAKER. AND HE INVESTED HERE, IN OREGON. IN HIS OWN BACK YARD.

OUR FAMILY BUSINESS, CONSER HOMES, HAS BEEN IN THE HOUSING BUSINESS FOR THE LAST 2 GENERATIONS.

WHEN IN THE MANUFACTURED HOME BUSINESS, WE DELIVERED AND INSTALLED ABOUT 1,000 HOMES TO BOTH RURAL AND URBAN, MEDIAN INCOME, OREGON FAMILIES.

WE'VE BUILT OVER 500 SINGLE FAMILY HOMES IN THE ALBANY CORVALLIS AREA

AND CURRENTLY, WE BUILD APARTMENTS FOR THE AVERAGE OREGONIAN.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO OUR HEARING TODAY?

THE QUALIFIED OPPORTUNITY ZONE IS A FEDERAL AND STATE-SUPPORTED PROGRAM WHICH WILL ALLOW US MODERN-DAY OREGONIANS TO INVEST AND IMPROVE OVERLOOKED AREAS OUR STATE.

AREAS WHICH HAVE BEEN PASSED BY, NOT SEEN INVESTMENT, OR NEW INFRASTRUCTURE.

WITH THE HELP OF THIS PROGRAM, THESE MANY WIDE SPOTS IN THE ROAD, THROUGHOUT OREGON, COULD SEE REAL STREETS AND REAL STRUCTURES.

FOLKS, WE'RE IN A HOUSING CRISIS.

THE GOV'T CAN'T PROVIDE ALL THE NEEDED HOUSING OR SOLVE THE PROBLEM ITSELF.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR, FAMILY BUSINESSES LIKE OURS, HAVE BEEN TRYING, AND CAN PROVIDE FOR THE NEED.

WE'VE ALREADY BUILT ONE APARTMENT PROJECT IN AN QUALIFIED OPPORTUNITY ZONE IN YAMHILL, COUNTY.

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WE HAVE ANOTHER PENDING IN LINN COUNTY IN A QOZ.

THE COST OF THE LAND, CONSTRUCTION, CITY FEES, AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED BARELY MAKE IT A VIABLE PROJECT. THE RENTS, WITHOUT GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY, WILL BARELY SUPPORT THE COST TO CONSTRUCT IT.

BEYOND HOUSING BEING VERY NEAR AND DEAR TO HEART, AND SOUL, OF OUR SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS, THE LASTING BENEFIT, AND THE REASON THAT PROJECT CAN MAKE SENSE LONGTERM, ARE THE QOZ BENEFITS.

WITH THAT, WE'LL BE ABLE TO EXTEND A CITY STREET, AND MAKE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS THAT DON'T EXIST.

AND PROVIDE 132 HOMES FOR FAMILIES; NEW ENERGY-EFFICIENT, SAFE, APARTMENT HOMES WHICH NOW, DON'T EXIST.

THE QOZ MAKES THIS A VIABLE PROJECT.

I URGE YOU NOT TO DECOUPLE FROM THE QOZ PROGRAM.

LIKE OTHERS, WE MAY HAVE TO RECONSIDER OUR CONTINUED INVESTING, HERE, IN OREGON'S FUTURE.

THERE MAY BE MORE FAVORABLE PLACES WE NEED TO GO TO INVEST OUR TIME, ENERGY AND HARD-EARNED DOLLARS TOWARD ALLEVIATING THIS HOUSING CRISIS.

THAT'S NOT A DECISION A 6TH GENERATION OREGONIAN SHOULD HAVE TO MAKE...

SHOULDN'T I BE ABLE TO DO THIS IN MY OWN BACKYARD?

HELP US TO DEVELOP THOSE OVERLOOKED, WIDE SPOTS IN THE ROAD.

PLEASE SUPPORT US, THOSE OF US WILLING TO TAKE THE RISK IN OREGON.

AGAIN, I URGE YOU TO THINK LONGTERM, BIG PICTURE, AND DO NOT DECOUPLE FROM THE QOZ PROGRAM.

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