

Testimony of John Dale in Support of HB 2488 Amendments

March 27, 2021

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, Vice-Chair Helm, and members of the Committee,

My name is John Therrien Dale Jr. I am a resident of Oregon City. I am also a member of the DPO Environmental Caucus. I have a background in environmental law and policy and in wastewater treatment and water pollution control. I was at one time Senior Assistant Editor at the then-named Water Pollution Control Federation in Washington, D.C., now named the Water Quality Federation. In that position, I dealt with both point-source and non-point-source water pollution and saw how bad land-use decisions create pollution and other types of problems. I wish to testify on behalf of the HB 2488-2 amendments.

Common sense tells us that each generation has the duty to pass on to the next generation a viable and sustainable environment and social structure. Land use decisions in line with this duty are absolutely crucial. In particular, land use decisions must preserve and restore Oregon's precious productive soils and ecology, which are essential for capturing greenhouse gasses, thus lessening climate change. They must also respond to cries for social justice and equity.

Implementing the bill

I will not reiterate other testimony highlighting the bill's benefits to Oregon at large and its previously under-served tribes and communities. Instead, let us address the potential negative issue of the bill's financial impact on small local governments in terms of "unfunded mandates." Such potential negative impacts will be avoided in the following ways.

1. The Governor's Recommended Budget allocates \$800,000 for updating the statewide land use planning goals. This allows for the initiation of the new Goal 20 in the 2021-2023 biennium.
2. The bill also directs other state agencies to coordinate with DLCD in implementing the goal.
3. The bill also establishes a Climate Justice Planning Goal Fund to increase DLCD and LCDC's capacity to hold hearings and to seek out grants to provide financial and technical support to local governments.
4. The bill also prioritizes funding for those local governments most in need of support.
5. In addition, compliance with the new goal will start with populous cities and counties 90 days after adoption but will apply to small and rural communities only 540 days after adoption, giving local governments in those areas a large extra time for compliance in recognition of their limited resources.

I believe these provisions in the bill will suffice to overcome any financial burdens created by the bill.

In summary, this bill helps Oregon address three emergency needs in front of us, namely, the needs of:

- mitigating climate change, pollution, and loss of habitat for other species,
- restoring damaged ecosystems and preserving arable soils, and
- bringing environmental justice and procedural equity to Oregon's historically under-served tribes and communities.

This bill brings all stakeholders together to consult about and to equitably share in the bill's burdens and benefits.

Please pass this bill, and I thank you for your attention.

John Dale