



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 22, 2021

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon, Co-Chairs
Members of the Committee

Re: SB 5530 – Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Budget – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon first studied land use in 1959 and has been active since in supporting our statewide land use planning program with local implementation. We believe that Goal 1 requires open access to the land use process and that all residents have a stake in the development of their communities. **As we plan our cities and counties, we are deciding where we will all live, work, shop, play and how we'll get there.**

The League believes that this department is critical to the health and wellbeing of Oregonians. Planning determines what kind of infrastructure communities will need. It helps assure our natural areas are protected, addresses natural hazards and that we have not only economically vital agricultural and forest lands, but lands for other industrial uses.

We are concerned with the loss of **the Willamette Valley regional planner**, especially in the wake of the September Beachie Creek and Lionshead Wildfires. The small communities up the Santiam Canyon will need planning assistance as they rebuild. **We ask that you consider reinstating that position.** As was mentioned in your hearing Feb. 17 by Rep. David Brock Smith, small local governments benefit from the expert regional planning staff provided by DLCD.

As the wildfires destroyed homes, businesses and special places, DLCD regional staff stepped up to help and the Commission adopted temporary rules to begin to help address the rebuilding effort. Their work has just begun. From the fires that burned in incorporated cities, to unincorporated towns to rural county areas, the mix of planning issues are as different as these jurisdictions. DLCD staff work and a review of current rules will be needed to help these areas rebuild. And we should also update rules to assure we are ready for the next disaster. Your support for these efforts will be critical over the next number of years.

Although the concept of moving the GS&S Division of DOGAMI to DLCD and the MLRR Division to DEQ is now being reconsidered, it is important to understand **the data provided by DOGAMI scientists is critical to both statewide planning and to local jurisdictions.** So, while we agree with Sen. Taylor's comments that it should not be "business as usual", we want to be sure it is clear that data should drive policy and DOGAMI's scientists provide high quality data for a number of planning issues.

We have followed the issue around the federal government grant monies being withheld from both the Dept. of Environmental Quality and DLCD's coastal program and appreciate Rep.

Holvey's attention to this issue. We have worked with the Dept. of Forestry and this legislature to address increased riparian buffers in forested areas, to repair, replace or remove legacy logging roads and to address aerial spraying that can pollute our coastal rivers and streams. **Until action is taken either by the legislature or the Board of Forestry, this issue will stay unresolved.** The current revenue loss has been approximately \$3 million to DLCDC and \$4 million to DEQ.

We support Policy Option Package (POP) 110 that will continue the work started under HB 2001 and 2003 (2019). This POP will keep the outstanding Housing staff hired in 2019 to implement those bills. The rulemaking has been done (and LWVOR was privileged to have participated in the most inclusive rules advisory committee ever at DLCDC), but the “on the ground” work by individual cities is just beginning. **This POP provides both staff and the all-important local government grant funding** to be sure the opportunity to increase housing units—hopefully some at a more affordable level in cities where jobs, shopping and transportation choices can occur. We also hope that these smaller, affordable units help build wealth for our BIPOC neighbors who were often left out of home purchases due to past zoning and banking practices. **Each staff member has created individual expertise in elements of this major planning program so we support the full FTE request.** The League appreciated the comments by many of you during the last hearing around protection of “naturally occurring affordable housing” and equity in infrastructure investments as these bills are implemented. We believe that the adopted rules provide some guidance on those issues, but it will take the work of local residents to help assure those policies are adopted and implemented locally.

Also linked to this POP and mentioned during your discussion last Wednesday is a clear partnership between Housing and Community Services, DLCDC and local jurisdictions. That partnership exists also with ODOT, the Dept. of Agriculture, the Dept. of Forestry, Dept. of Environmental Quality, Business Oregon and the Oregon Health Authority among others. It was this partnership that made us consider a home for DOGAMI scientists in order to be more efficient with administrative costs while keeping the science work.

We also support POP 111 to begin to implement the newly updated [Oregon's Climate Change Adaptation Framework with Blueprint](#). The League believes that addressing climate change not only by reducing greenhouse gases, but also adapting to our inevitable changing future is critical to all of Oregon. **This POP continues a staff lead** to continue working with the broad range of federal, state and local agencies and other experts who, along with the public, developed this document that provides multiple solutions to addressing climate risks. **Having one staff person to coordinate the immense work is needed to be sure Oregon is moving toward a better future for all Oregonians or this work will sit on a shelf when action is needed.**

We support POP 112 to continue the rulemaking started way back in 2010 **to address the links between transportation choices, greenhouse gasses and land use planning.** Although the League has been disappointed that this work was delayed, it has, in fact, provided opportunities to look beyond just a reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) toward a more equitable transportation system. The RAC membership is again more inclusive with varied interests, viewpoints and life experiences—all of which will make for a better set of rules and outcomes for all. **This work will take General Fund assistance** to eight metropolitan planning organizations around the state (and their local governments) to implement the rules to be adopted by the end of 2021.

Lastly, we are intrigued by POP 90 and can support the \$800,000 investment proposed by the Governor. We believe that the money will begin the work of linking climate change strategies and adding equity to the current 19 Goals. One of the bills the legislature may consider is HB 2488 with a -1 amendment that adds clarity and focus to this work. This bill would create a process to add a Goal 20 on Climate that would require consideration of climate change when implementing the other 19 Goals. Changes to Goals or a new Goal requires rigorous public outreach throughout the state. And Goals are really “rules” to DLCD, so an inclusive rulemaking committee will be needed as well. We appreciate the Governor’s commitment to addressing climate change in all state agencies and linking this issue to our statewide land use planning program.

The comments by Deputy Director Kirsten Greene last Wednesday about where Oregon can address alternatives to the transit services available in our large urban areas to those in rural areas is certainly something the League can support. But we do believe that the \$1 million investment in rural transportation choices needs more discussion and clarity. Each rural community has a different set of needs and some have begun creating answers for this transportation need—especially for the older rural Oregonians in these communities. This investment is a beginning but implementing any plans created will take a significant state or federal investment.

We hope you will take special note of **Slide 40** of the agency presentation. A common theme of LWVOR testimony is agency collaboration and partnerships. This slide indicates the state agency partnership but DLCD also partners with all of Oregon’s cities and counties as they work together to implement the state’s Goals and the community’s Visions. This small agency is so critical to **where we will all live, work, shop, play and how we’ll get there** that we hope this Committee is generous in your budget allocations.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



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