

Dear Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee:

I am a professor in community and regional planning at the University of Oregon and Co-Director of the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement. I study issues related to HB 2558 including: 1) the integration of land use, transportation, and climate change policy at a state level; 2) the efficacy of growth management policy; and 3) perceptions of livability and affordability in Oregon. I am a resident of Eugene and I am writing in support of HB 2558. The views I'm sharing do not represent my employer or my colleagues.

Urban form dominated by single family homes and auto-dependent development hampers our ability to meet climate goals and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Reducing miles driven requires building a mixture of uses closer together and increasing the share of non-auto oriented modes of transportation like biking, walking, and transit.

Research on integrating climate, transportation, and land use policy in Oregon (and other states including California, Washington and Maryland) showed the following opportunities and challenges in achieving climate goals (Lewis, Zako, Biddle and Isbell, 2018):

- State authority over land use provides an opportunity to allow compact development
- Regulations prevent compact development, but state legislatures have a role to play in relaxing regulations to remove barriers
- Local governments lack financial and technical resources to implement plans

Research on growth management implementation shows that a strong state role in planning can facilitate compact development and prevent sprawl (Ingram et. al, 2009; Parker, Lewis, Kato, and Moore, 2015). One of the reasons Oregon has been so effective at managing growth is the strong role of the state established by Oregon's Statewide Planning Program. By taking state legislative action that removes barriers statewide, local governments can more efficiently allow dense housing in places it makes sense.

Our research on resident perceptions of livability shows that residents in smaller Oregon metros tradeoff affordability for livability in making housing location decisions (Lewis and Parker, 2018). As such, families would like to live in accessibility-rich neighborhoods but cost pushes them to neighborhoods further away and increases vehicle miles traveled. Our research also found that residents desire the amenities that density provides through complete, mixed-use neighborhoods. At the same time, Oregon is facing a housing crisis that reaches urban and rural areas alike (Lewis, Parker, and Hall, 2018).

Building housing in transit-rich areas gives residents alternatives to auto-dependency and yields densities needed to achieve amenity-rich complete neighborhoods. These scarce neighborhoods are in high demand but low supply as residents tradeoff affordability for accessibility. This bill allows but does not require construction of a particular housing type or density. HB 2558 removes the regulatory barriers to building denser housing in close proximity of transit and gives residents more choices in where to live. I encourage you to pass HB 2558.

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References

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- Lewis, R., Parker, R., & Hall, R. (2018). *Oregon's Housing Affordability Crisis: Results of a Statewide Survey of Oregon Cities*. Eugene, OR: Institute for Policy Research and Engagement.
- Parker, R., Lewis, R, Moore, T. & Kato, K. (2015). *Analysis of Land Use Efficiency in Oregon Cities: A Report to the HB 2254 Rules Committee*. Prepared for: HB 2254 Rules Advisory Committee, Department of Land Conservation & Development. Eugene, OR: Community Service Center.