

Submitter: Scott Franke
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

I have been a board member of the land use group currently known as THRIVE Hood River for the last 25 years, during which we have worked hard to keep the UGB from expanding needlessly to preserve our valuable farm land, primarily planted with fruit trees, but also vineyards in this century. Farm crops are by far the economic driver of our county economy.

The city of Hood River has made significant strides toward rezoning land inside UGB to allow more housing types and density and to remove unnecessary local barriers to development, and this has happened in no small part because the required analysis currently required to allow for UGB expansion has found that there is sufficient land within the current UGB to permit needed housing for years to come, forcing the city council to do the needed work to facilitate infill. We, as a community, are doing the hard work to try to allow for more affordable housing as well.

Had the laws allowed even a one-time pass on the current UGB expansion requirements, as the dash-17 amendment to HB 3414 would, I am convinced that this effort to do things better by focusing on maximizing the use of the lands within the UGB would not have happened. The city, if permitted, would have pushed the city out with the resultant development sprawl that would eat up valuable agricultural land while avoiding the hard work of overcoming NIMBYism and educating the citizenry about the benefits everyone can realize.

We are continuing to seek to use some of the vacant lands within the current UGB to expand multi-use park space, now moving forward with our park department solidly behind that effort after years of lobbying efforts, which will help to address climate change by not putting such facilities outside of reasonable foot and bike range, and paving over more lands, adding more roads, and expanding beyond the EFU-urban interface, which would only increase those problems.

Please vote no on this terribly unfortunate amendment and send the message that the local politicians must step up to address these modern problems in a manner that will make things better and not worse.

Sincerely,

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