

Submitter: Robert L and Gretchen Pederson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Measure: HB3197

To: House Committee on Rules

Submitted by Gretchen and Robert Pederson

Re: HB 3197– clear & objective standards on rural land

We, along with Central Oregon LandWatch, 1000 Friends of Oregon, Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association, and others urge support for HB 3197. It clarifies that “clear and objective” standards apply to residential development within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The Legislature adopted the “clear and objective” statute with the intent of having it apply to residential development within the UGB. Later, a case decided by the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) interpreted this to apply to the development of housing even outside of the UGB. We think that this was an error, and that HB 3197 would correct that.

Rural lands that include farms and forest zones need continuing protection from residential developments. Agricultural land is vital to our state’s economy. Forest zones provide habitats that protect our wildlife.

Builders are jumping to oppose this bill. If LUBA’s interpretation stands, rural lands will open up to developers. Some try to justify their opposition by arguing that areas outside the UGB will help provide housing for homeless people. This is a flawed argument. Rural lands are totally inappropriate for people who require transportation, mental health support, food supplies, and other infrastructure available within the UGB.

Water resources are already overextended in rural areas. Wells are going dry. Irrigation water is being rationed. An increase in building and population density will only exacerbate these problems.

HB 3197 would not restrict developments within the UGB where additional housing should be concentrated. Please protect our rural landscapes for the intended uses that they best serve.

Sincerely,

Robert and Gretchen Pederson