

Submitter: Elisabeth Blizzard

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

Dear Chair Jama, Senator Anderson, Senator Knopp, Senator Patterson, and Senator Sollman,

Although SB 1537 has many excellent provisions to address Oregon's housing crisis, I strongly object to the provision that enables communities to expand their Urban Growth Boundaries without regard for Oregon's existing land use system.

There is simply no need to undermine our current land use system to provide the housing we need.

Oregon communities already contain more than 10,000 acres of vacant land designed for residential uses inside their current UGB. Much of this land is already in established city and town centers, along existing main streets and town centers that can support additional housing. Expanding UGBs to provide more housing at the fringe will simply create more competition for infrastructure that's sorely needed within urban areas.

Enabling communities to expand their UGBs for housing means that growth will happen at the urban fringe, requiring new expensive water, sewer, and road infrastructure as well as costs for emergency services. These expenses will surely increase development and housing costs. This is no way to make housing more affordable.

Housing at the edge of already-urbanized areas also means that residents will have to travel further for food, work, school, and daily errands. This additional travel will severely undermine Oregon's efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Increased housing at the urban fringe also means the loss of valuable farmland, woodlands, and environmentally sensitive areas. In Washington County, where I live, there is already strong opposition to new roads that destroy valuable farmland in order to provide more commuting options for new residents within the existing UGB. This problem will be made worse, wherever it occurs in the state, if UGBs are expanded without consideration of our existing Land Use System..

Oregon's Land Use System was developed to address 19 Statewide Goals. To usurp a system that has, for more than 50 years, successfully integrated these goals in order to fulfill one goal makes no sense, and will ultimately undermine our ability to

maintain Oregon's livability for all of its citizens.

Please amend SB 1537 to remove the provision to expand Urban Growth Boundaries outside of the established Land Use process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elisabeth Blizzard