



February 7, 2024

Oregon Legislature  
Senate Committee on Housing and Development  
Salem, OR

Re: Oppose SB 1537 as currently written

Dear Members of the Committee,

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is an Oregon nonprofit organization whose mission is protection of coastal natural resources and working with coastal communities to enhance livability.

ORCA writes you today to **oppose** SB 1537 as currently written. While we support many of its provisions, including funding infrastructure for housing, and the bill's focus on affordable housing, we cannot support the bill with the provision allowing Urban Growth Boundary expansions.

This provision would destroy the heart of the land use laws, which aim to keep urban communities compact, thus also protecting rural uses such as farm and forest lands. Allowing every city in Oregon to expand its UGB without any showing of need is a strictly political move, and has no relationship to building affordable housing. Building houses on the edge of cities leads to yet more expensive dwellings.

Coastal cities are among the most desperately in need of affordable housing. They also frequently have a high number of second homes and short-term rentals, limiting the ability of current housing stock to be used for workforce housing. Giving every city the chance to expand the UGB for housing will simply lead to more non-affordable dwellings in coastal towns, exacerbating an already serious problem.

Please **oppose** SB 1537 as long as it allows these UGB expansions. The existing law provides a pathway for UGB expansions when proven necessary. The process works well. Please REMOVE the expansion provision in SB 1537 and concentrate on incentivizing moderately-priced housing, as well as conversion of underutilized buildings, inside UGBs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Cameron La Follette, Executive Director

