

Submitter: Raechel Gano  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HB4026

Chair Fahey and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

I'm testifying today in opposition to the -1 Amendment to House Bill 4026. My family and I operate a small vineyard and winery right next door to North Plains and would like to see the area retain its precious soils for agriculture and preserve the green spaces so close to the city for all to enjoy.

I am not opposed to growth. Our town will grow in population and add industries in addition to agriculture. But the city's plan isn't looking inside first to support our existing commercial areas, build the type of housing that we can afford, and plan for infrastructure costs. As a result, North Plains is needlessly taking far more land than it needs - destroying surrounding agricultural land forever in the process.

I and other North Plains residents have been closed out of the process. The city created this plan mainly with external stakeholders: landowners looking to sell for millions and developers. They failed to properly notice their original decision in the newspaper and so it was remanded back to them. Even though the original decision was invalidated, they said repeatedly that it was final and we couldn't give comment on anything but new amendments. After the city passed the resolution a second time, 10% percent of our community signed a petition asking to recall the decision. Instead of taking this as a queue that the community wants to be involved in the decision, the city is now trying to remove our right to participate in democracy. They advocated to insert the -1 amendment into HB 4026 at the last minute (Friday afternoon, mid-session, before a 3-day weekend) to take the right to a referendum away from all Oregonians, and they want to make this provision retroactive to deny us the vote we just asked for.

We want the city to plan, but with the community at the table. The city says that this exact UGB plan is required by the state, but that is false. North Plains is required to do a 20-year planning process - it is not required to enact this exact plan that their consultants and monied interests have designed. Many of us do not feel that North Plains' expansion by 2.2 times - the biggest UGB expansion by percentage in Oregon's history - is necessary, and we want more say about what industries we invite in, how we build housing that's within working families' means, how we revitalize our city center which doesn't even have a grocery store, and how we make sure that agriculture around our city can continue to thrive.

The right to call a referendum is central to us as Oregonians. The right to a

referendum is granted by our Constitution to provide meaningful public participation. It is not easy to put a referendum on the ballot - this is the first referendum on a UGB expansion in the 50 years of Oregon's land use program. The fact that North Plains got this on the ballot shows that the magnitude of this expansion and the lack of public engagement were so great that this is the only way our city's residents felt we could have a say in this decision. If referenda are banned for UGB expansions, cities like ours will have no option but to do what King City has done and recall city council members by referendum. We do not want or need to recall elected officials over one decision. We do want to be at the table to help shape smart growth that builds our economy at a cost we can afford and for all residents of our city. For these reasons and more, please vote NO on HB 4026-1.

Thank you for your service,

Raechel