

Submitter: Annette Evans
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4026

I write to OPPOSE the Amendment to HB 4026 that would prevent the public from bringing a referendum to reverse an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expansion decision. We want cities to perform smart planning with the community at the table. People and businesses living outside a city limit or UGB are just as much a part of the community impacted by City government decisions as people and businesses living within the city limit or UGB. My family operates farmland near the City of North Plains proposed UGB expansion.

Specifically, North Plains is currently seeking to expand their UGB onto prime farmland with Type 1 soil. This UGB expansion will be disruptive and damaging to farm activities, the wildlife living in the area, increase pollution and climate change, and forever will decrease and harm Oregon's economic and agriculture footprint. 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. I and other community members do not feel that North Plains needs to expand by 2.2 times - the biggest UGB expansion by percentage in Oregon's history. Smart planning and growth that is open and transparent with the public at large is needed. After speaking with residents of the City of North Plains, it is apparent that many moved to this community seeking a 'small town' and not the urban sprawl that is occurring in other cities across the county and our state.

The right to call a referendum is central to 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 concerned residents of the City of 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 city residents felt they could have a say in this decision. If referenda are banned for UGB expansions, cities will have no option but to do what King City has done and recall city council members by referendum. The residents of North Plains do not want or need to recall elected officials over one decision. From the start and through the process, the public needs to be at the table to help shape smart growth that builds the economy at a cost city residents and communities can afford while mitigating damage to our precious farmland and forests.

For this and many other reasons, I OPPOSE HB 4026 as currently Amended.