

Submitter: Linda Galas-Merten
On Behalf Of: Self
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4026

I am fully in favor of making voting accessible to everyone, which is the purpose of HB 4026. However, I am opposed to attaching an amendment that does just the opposite. Somehow the City of North Plains found a way to attach an amendment which would take away citizen rights to refer to the voters the nefarious deeds of a City Council hell bent on getting its way in contradiction to voter wishes. To wit, the amendment in question says this:

“(5) A local government determination described in subsection (1) of this section is NOT (emphasis added) subject to being referred to voters by referendumpetition and is reviewable EXCLUSIVELY (emphasis added) under this section.

“SECTION 2. The amendments to ORS 197.626 by section 1 of this 2024 Act apply to all local government determinations described in ORS 197.626 (1) made on or after January 1, 2023.

“SECTION 3. This 2024 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2024 Act takes effect on its passage.”.

Let me see if I understand this accurately: this amendment strips away a citizen's right to vote on land use if the city wants to make a land grab without any input from citizens, it wants to make it retroactive to the beginning of last year, and it's claiming this is an emergency? On the grounds of preserving peace? Of preserving health? Of preserving safety? Just what is the City of North Plains implying here?

This is the kind of politicking that I thought we got rid of when Boss Tweed was finally tossed out in New York and sent to jail. This is a slap in the face to the citizens of North Plains who have a right to vote on matters that affect THEIR peace, health, and safety and that is what we intend to do in May when the referendum is set to be on the ballot.

Please! Strip this Amendment from the bill. Allow North Plains citizens (and all other citizens of Oregon that will be affected by this amendment) to vote. All we want is the right to grow at our own pace, design a destination town, and plan conservatively for our future so that all citizens can thrive whether they grow crops or own small businesses, We want the chance to grow SMART. We want our town to reflect our community. We want to grow slow but wisely, so we thrive for decades to come. It seems the city council has other ideas and wants citizens to have NO say in the matter. Surely this is antithetical to the entire intent of HB 4026.

Thank you, Linda Galas-Merten Merten Vineyards North Plains Oregon