

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

I write in OPPOSITION to HB 4026A, which bans the use of citizen referenda to challenge Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expansions and makes this provision retroactive to January 1, 2023.

There are serious issues with this bill to include impacts to citizen constitutional rights as noted in a letter by Kenneth P. Dobson, Attorney at Law dated 2/29/2024. Additionally, this bill carried out in communities across the state will lead to increased impacts of climate change and food insecurity.

Citizen referenda is used when citizens disagree with the decisions of the jurisdiction or feel shut out of the decision-making process which is the case of the City of North Plains proposed UGB. No community of people will go to the trouble of qualifying and supporting a referendum unless they believe serious community harm is at stake. We the people need to retain our constitutional rights to include the option for citizen referenda.

The public process for land use and planning is critical. I grow crops on farmland classified as "prime farm soils" as defined by the Oregon State University County Survey Soil Report and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Reports. This prime farmland is located near the proposed North Plains UGB expansion in Washington County. Government needs to prioritize our environment and natural resources to preserve these prime soils for feeding Americans and the people around the world. When cities seek to expand their UGB, they need to consider the impacts they create with urban sprawl onto valued farmland. Farmland is limited and once the land is paved under with asphalt, the prime soils will be gone forever. Oregonians and our nation will suffer the impacts of increased food insecurities.

Please vote "no" on the HB 4026A and allow citizen referenda to be the voice of the people for serious issues within their jurisdiction.