

Submitter: Sarah Deumling

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

SB 1537

There is no doubt that Oregon needs more affordable housing and it is laudable that the governor has this as a priority. In my opinion it is unconscionable to use this as an excuse to waive the standard procedures to modify urban growth boundaries. I can't imagine that there is any other credible reason for this except some special interest which hopes to make a lot of money. We have more than enough acres within existing UGBs to locate the housing we need. We need to put lots of housing in close-in neighborhoods where folks have easy (not car dependent) access to services and jobs. Wealthy people who want large houses on large lots on the periphery are perfectly able to look out for themselves. A major goal of our land use laws is to prevent sprawl. The UGB portion of SB 1537 will primarily add to sprawl. An incredibly BAD IDEA!

Most of the beautiful European cities which Americans love to visit accommodate many more people on much smaller footprints than our cities while maintaining a high quality of life and using far less fossil fuel per capita. We can do this too. After all we are Americans who pride ourselves on our ingenuity, creativity, and can-do spirit. As climate change progresses more rapidly than even believers had expected few things are as important as protecting our farm and forest land and our open spaces for a whole list of reasons. I live in a large forest (part of the largest contiguous piece of forest left in the Willamette Valley) just a stone's throw (so-to-speak) from the western edge of Salem's UGB. This forest provides not only jobs and wood products but it filters and cleans the air coming in on westerly breezes, it protects groundwater for homes and farms, plants and animals, it provides recreation for many local folks and abundant environment for our important pollinators as well as intact functioning ecosystems. McMansions are already multiplying in the hills around us. A little more sprawl and we are toast. To paraphrase former governor Tom McCall - when that happens I guess I won't want to live here anyway.

I implore you to pass this bill after amending it to remove the UGB expansion section!

Sincerely and Hopefully,
Sarah Deumling