

Submitter: Jeffrey Heilman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

If lack of affordable and middle housing were an illness, then SB 1537 would be a remedy with serious and long-term adverse side effects. Fortunately, with amendments, the negative side effects can be avoided.

SB 1537 would address the biggest barrier to affordable and middle housing production by providing much needed infrastructure funding and financing programs and tools. In central Oregon, there is no shortage of vacant land within the existing UGB. However, most of that land lacks adequate infrastructure – such as roads and utilities – needed to support the development of the kind of housing that Oregonians need most. I strongly support the funding and financing programs and tools that are part of SB 1537.

At the same time, I also urge you to amend SB 1537 to remove the large UGB expansion provisions (sections 48-54). UGBs and our land use laws are vital to ensuring that we are able to wisely manage our rapid growth. One need only visit our neighboring states that lack our urban expansion and land use management provisions, to see numerous examples of rapid sprawl that has not only consumed farm and forest land but that has also failed to provide a meaningful supply of affordable and middle housing. The large UGB expansion provisions in SB 1537 would have the same result.

Local jurisdictions already have two options for expanding/amending their UGBs - the traditional approach and the simplified approach. These existing expansion options are not the reason that developers haven't produced enough affordable and middle housing. The full (public and private) cost of developing vacant land is a major barrier and that can be addressed with the infrastructure funding and financing programs and tools in SB 1537.

With an amendment to sections 48-54 to eliminate the large UGB expansion provisions, this bill will dramatically increase housing supply, choice, and affordability in every Oregon community, without eroding our livability, health, and environment. Please support amending SB 1537 to remove the large, expedited UGB growth expansions, and once amended, please vote to pass this important legislation.