

Submitter: Richard van Pelt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

I submit this testimony to urge you to eliminate from the bill those provisions that allow for a "one-time" UGB expansion for all cities in Oregon.

Fifty years ago Oregon faced a crisis that threatened what Oregonians then thought to be an existential attack on what makes Oregon the state that it is. We looked to north and to the south. We did not like what we saw as our future. We did something extraordinary. We collaborated. We involved citizens from across the state in a bi-partisan effort to preserve the Oregon heart. We recognized that, like a heart, Oregon has urban and rural chambers.

We well understood that an enlarged heart threatened the well-being of the body we cherished.

For fifty years we have sought to have cities work with the Oregon Departments of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fish and Wildlife to ensure our cities don't expand onto our best farmland, forest land, and natural areas.

Built into our land use system is the principle of the urban growth boundary (UGB). Towns and cities were given the task of identifying future growth needs and to designate land that would be set aside for development before enlarging the urban heart into surrounding prime value non-urban lands.

The people of Oregon enacted land use goals and programs in order to preserve Oregon for future generations. We spent the subsequent fifty years as interests supporting SB 1537 have sought to clog the arteries. The principles underlying SB 100 remain valid today, and you have before a bill that would substantively undermine the spirit of the bill and the efforts of thousands of Oregonians to ensure that this heart continues to thrive. These are the principles that this bill risks undermining:

Uncoordinated use of lands within this state threaten the orderly development, the environment of this state and the health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity and welfare of the people of this state... Senate Bill 100 (ORS 197.005)

In order to assure the highest possible level of livability in Oregon, it is necessary to provide for properly prepared and coordinated comprehensive plans for cities and counties, regional areas and the state as a whole... Senate Bill 100 (ORS 197.010)

Open land used for agricultural use is an efficient means of conserving natural resources that constitute an important physical, social, aesthetic and economic asset to all the people of this state, whether living in rural, urban or metropolitan areas of the state... Senate Bill 101 (ORS 215.243)

What Oregonians wanted then we still want today.\\:

- Citizen Involvement
- Protect Agricultural Lands
- Protect Forest Lands
- Contain Urban Expansion
- Link Transportation to Development
- Protect Coastal Resources
- Link Economic Development to Land Use

The gift the Governor seeks is really just a Trojan horse.

This bill risks unravelling the fabric of Oregon's land use. I ask only that the bill require cities to build out to the urban growth boundaries and to faithfully live up to their responsibilities before expanding into the heart of Oregon's agriculture.