

Submitter: Michael Lind
On Behalf Of: Myself
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure: SB1537

February 79, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development
From: Michael Lind, property owner and taxpayer, Polk County.
Re: SB 1537-- Please Remove UGB Sections of Bill

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-chair Anderson, and members of the Committee,
I am asking that you remove the sections of SB 1537 that relate to any type of extension of Urban Growth Boundaries. My reasons:

1. All that is needed to house people with no shelter or to house people if they lose their housing is money for infrastructure and or remodeling—inside the UGB. There is no reason to weaken our land use laws by allowing developers to ruin land outside the current UGBs.

2. This bill says the UGB expansion is a “one-time” allowance. I do not at all believe that. This governor and legislature weakened our UGB procedures just last session by passing SB 4 and SB 70! Both were said to be “one-time” allowances. Obviously, not true.

3. The housing built outside the UGB via SB 1537 would not be for the population Governor Kotek promised to house! These houses will only lure middle and upper-middle-class people from out-of-state to move here! The opposite of what we need.

4. Farmland would be destroyed if houses were built on the urban reserves. Food is going to be more important than housing in the future due to climate change. Once you build on farmland, you can't get it back to farmland.

5. The UGB expansion criteria in SB 1537 are draconian! No one can protest where the new houses will be built. A farmer next door is out of luck! Even the county has no say! This is a violation of Goal 1, citizen involvement. If someone wants to stop the housing development, they have to go to circuit court (very expensive) and pay the builder's attorney fees if the builder prevails! This is a gift to home builders as is all the tax payer paid funds for their infrastructure!

6. The UGB sections of this bill will create urban sprawl and lead to the Californication of our bountiful and beautiful state.

7. What we need is more housing for low-income people, which should mean “in filling” where public transport or walking is possible, and less expense of travel costs to work and shopping, such as apartment buildings or small houses, not big homes on the far edges of towns. Oregon has housing costs on par with other similar cities; our land use system with growth boundaries is not the cause of current high costs.

8. You can make Senate Bill 1537 into a good bill. I urge you to amend it to remove Sections 48 through 60 that provide for UGB expansion and pass the remainder of the bill which is needed in response to our affordable crisis.