



February 9, 2025

Rep. Pam Marsh, Chair
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2316

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee:

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice. We have actively worked to ensure housing for all Oregonians, in every neighborhood. **We oppose HB 2316.**

HB 2316 would override land use and environmental laws to allow housing outside urban growth boundaries (UGBs), on state-owned lands controlled by Departments of Forestry, Fish & Wildlife, and Transportation. It also allows any state owned land, anywhere, to be traded for private property for housing. These lands - termed "Home Start Lands" - could be developed only with detached, single units - the most expensive type to serve.

Many of these lands are forested or covered with natural resources. None of them has any services, and so would be very expensive to provide with the necessary infrastructure of sewer, water, and roads. The bill requires the state to cover all these costs, by "Prepar[ing] the land for housing, through grading, surveying, planning, installing infrastructure for residential development on the land and other activities." (HB 2316, p. 3, lines 20-21) The state and local governments currently lack sufficient funds to provide infrastructure extensions and upgrades to the thousands and thousands of vacant residential lands that are already inside our towns and cities - this is where our focus should be.

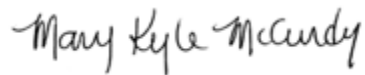
These lands are not near the things people need to get to every day, like schools, jobs, and stores, and thus would require more driving - adding not only to climate pollution but also to a family's expenses. This exurban development would make it very difficult and unlikely that these areas could in the future, even if near a city, be brought into a city and fully urbanized.

Finally, some of these lands - depending on how they are designated as “Home Start Lands” - are intended to be for those of moderate and lower incomes. We agree that homeownership for those of moderate and lower incomes is a critical objective, and is the subject of other bills this session. But creating isolated enclaves, outside communities, based on income is not the answer.

We also agree that there is an untapped and potentially significant resource in publicly owned lands inside UGBs that should be examined for residential development. We have supported bills in the past to achieve even an inventory of such lands, but there has been pushback. We would support doing more here. There are examples of where nonprofit housing developers have partnered with school or park districts to develop housing on surplus lands, and TriMet has a robust transit-oriented development program. But Oregon can do more.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy".

Associate Director