

Statement Supporting SB 258 and SB 114

To: Senate Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources

From: Jeff Cohen, Philomath resident and homeowner

Date: March 31, 2017

When the legislature passed/approved, and the governor signed into law, SB1573, a Constitutional crisis was initiated. SB1573 usurps the City Charters of at least 30 Oregon cities, and nullifies the right of residents to vote on land annexations into their respective cities. This is a decimation of local-rule, and violates the State Constitution of Oregon. The Oregon Constitution explicitly prohibits the legislature from “amending” or “repealing” city charters (Article XI, Section 2). An added consequence is that this makes it even easier for Developers (many of whom are not even local to the areas they develop) to reap huge profits while leaving taxpayers to defray the costs of providing the infrastructure for these developments and to pay for shortfalls that System Development Charges (SDCs) fail to adequately fund. Sometimes, the actual costs are not even determined prior to approvals and build-outs because requisite studies and projections are not first performed as due-diligence. Voters/Residents must not be denied the right to vote on land annexations and development. Residents bear the financial and quality-of-life costs for uncontrolled and non-sustainable growth. Please approve SB258 and SB114 to overturn the ill-conceived and detrimental SB1573 that was rushed through the legislature on an emergency basis, even though no actual emergency nor urgency existed that in any way could have justified not allowing sufficient time for a thoughtful reading and study of SB1573 at the time it was rushed to a vote.

Thank you very much,

Jeff Cohen
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