



OLAWA'S Testimony in Opposition to HB 4095

My name is Paul Lipscomb, I live just outside of Sisters Oregon, and I am the Vice President of OLAWA, the Oregon Land and Water Alliance. OLAWA is a 501c3 corporation that educates and advocates for sound public policy related to land use and water use issues in Central Oregon and throughout the State of Oregon. I have been authorized by the Board of Directors of OLAWA to submit this letter on its behalf.

While building affordable housing needs to be an important public policy goal throughout our state, other important public policy goals should not be thrown under the bus in order to facilitate the affordable housing goal. Preserving and protecting our important land use protections has been a major sustaining achievement in the state of Oregon.

Forcing advocates of both building affordable housing and protecting our land use laws to choose one public policy goal over the other would be a legislative error. We need both, and

both can and should be accomplished without impairing the other. This bill would be the legislative equivalent of imposing a Sophie's Choice on every city in Oregon.

As just one example, here in Sisters country, this bill would permit the City of Sisters to carve out 50 acres off of the beautiful Patterson Ranch just west of the City limits. It could be done without compliance with the usual LCDC rules and regulations attendant to any other expansion of the urban growth boundary, and without any input at all from Deschutes County which is the current governmental entity responsible for those lands.

And of those new 50 acres, only 15 would be required to be developed as affordable housing. The rest could be commercial or industrial or single family residential. Worse, this bill includes no definition at all of what affordable housing is: motel rooms that can be rented by the month? Or trailer parks? Or perhaps single family homes that can be sold for 50% of the average home value in the city?

Each city in this state is already required to maintain an inventory of a 20 year supply of developable lands within its Urban Growth Boundary. This should be enough land to meet the need for affordable housing in Sisters and in other small towns and large cities throughout the state.

Incentive programs designed to encourage the voluntary development of affordable housing would be a much better approach to this important public policy goal. And it would not impair the important protections provided by our land use laws and regulations.

Finally, during the 2019 legislative session the legislature established a pilot program to allow two cities in Deschutes Co. to adopt a similar proposal. That pilot program should be allowed to run its course before expanding that program statewide.

Thank you for giving our concerns your attention when considering this bill.

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