

Members of the Committee,

My name is Hope. I am writing on behalf of LandWatch Lane County (LW) , a small nonprofit land use advocacy organization that was established in 1997. LW works on behalf of our members throughout the state and assists neighbors throughout Lane County who are concerned about land use proposals in their communities.

LW supports HB 2560 because, not unlike the right to vote the right to public participation requires adequate and accessible opportunities to be heard. During the past year of COVID isolation and related restrictions, 100% of the land use hearings and meetings in Lane County have been held virtually; there have been no problems with these remotely held events, and it has actually enabled more applicants and agents to participate. This may be partly attributable to the fact that many applicants, and neighbors, live in rural areas far from the location of the county Public Works offices where meetings and hearings are held, and therefore participating remotely is more accessible and affordable.

It really does not make sense to continue to require people to drive long distances for meetings and hearings that may last for only a short period of time, or that go on so long that some people have to leave before their item of interest comes up on the agenda; we have learned there are other ways to participate and that we have the technology to do so.

Please support and pass this bill out of committee.

Thank you.

Hope Segel-Vaccher