

February 3, 2021

To: House Committee on Housing
Subject: "No" on HB 2655

Dear Chair Fahey and members of the Housing Committee,

Please vote No on HB 2655. There are many reasons why this legislation should not become law. To allow residential densities to change lot by lot in rural areas goes against the goal of thoughtful development that the Oregon land use system strives to achieve.

One of the negative consequences of this legislation would be degradation and loss of wildlife habitat. All Oregon counties have identified those areas that contain important big game wildlife habitat and are required to protect those natural resources under state land use Goal 5.

In Linn County, areas that are designated as important big game habitat are protected mainly by maintaining lower housing density limits that are recommended by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. If a Section contains designated big game habitat, but exceeds the recommended housing density limits, then the habitat in that Section is designated as Impacted. Once a Section is designated as Impacted then the county is no longer required to apply reduced housing density limits in that Section to protect the important big game habitat.

In those rural Sections that include designated big game habitat, allowing the housing density to increase as allowed under HB 2655 would lead over time to the designation of whole Sections as Impacted Habitat. This would effectively remove the protection of big game habitat for the entirety of each of those Sections.

Whether you are a conservationist, a hunter, or neither, most Oregonians care deeply about wildlife habitat, want to see it protected for future generations, and do not want to see big game habitat lost due to poor land use legislation.

Respectfully,

Phillip Callaway
Crawfordsville, OR