

**Testimony of Randy Tucker, Legislative Affairs Manager  
In Opposition to House Bill 2655  
House Committee on Housing  
February 4, 2021**



Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee:

Metro is the regional government for the greater Portland metropolitan area, tasked by Oregon statute with making decisions every six years about how and where the region will grow. Our region has a strong track record of supporting the core purposes of Oregon's statewide planning system – protecting farms and forests by facilitating efficient urban development, while providing additional room for people and jobs when needed by expanding the urban growth boundary.

In 2007, a broad range of interests dissatisfied with the longstanding system for expanding the Portland region's urban growth boundary came together to support Senate Bill 1011, which established a new process for long-range growth management in the region. SB 1011 authorized the designation of urban reserves, which are first priority for inclusion in the UGB, and rural reserves, which are off limits to UGB expansion for up to 50 years. While the actual designation of these reserves proved more challenging than expected, that process is finally complete, and the system provides both flexibility and predictability to growth management in the Portland metropolitan region.

In recent years, we have worked with many partners to further improve how we manage growth. We have financially supported local efforts to make the most of existing land, required concept planning to ensure that urban growth boundary expansions will result in needed housing, passed legislation authorizing mid-cycle adjustments to the UGB, and continuously improved our technical analyses that support growth management decisions. In its most recent growth management decision in 2018, the Metro Council added four well-planned areas to the UGB as proposed by four cities in the region, and that year Metro's voters also approved a \$652.8 million bond measure to support investments in affordable housing.

HB 2655 would significantly undermine the land use system in the Portland region by essentially *requiring* low-density urbanization of certain rural areas outside the UGB. I have submitted a map that shows the location of rural residential areas overlaid with urban reserves, rural reserves, and Metro's UGB. As you can see, the impact of this bill in our region would be felt primarily, though not exclusively, in Clackamas County.

Requiring all of these areas to be rezoned to allow one-acre lots will undermine the ability to efficiently urbanize areas in urban reserves, and is likely to create or

exacerbate conflicts with existing agricultural operations in rural reserves. HB 2655 would authorize thousands of new land divisions and homes in areas outside the UGB without any consideration of how these new, essentially urban areas would be served by sanitation, water and transportation infrastructure.

Existing state rules governing the urban and rural reserves prohibit the creation of smaller parcels or lots than were allowed at the time the reserves were designated. This is sound policy that preserves both the rural character of rural lands and the ability to efficiently urbanize areas once they are added to the urban growth boundary. The rural sprawl and excessive parcelization that would be authorized under HB 2655 would frustrate both of these objectives.

HB 2655 represents misguided policy that would undermine sound land use in the Portland metropolitan region. We urge you not to move it forward.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.