

HB 2488-2 Equity and Climate in Land Use

Chair Power, Vice chairs Bonham and Sollman and members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of adoption of HB 2488-2 which in its amended version establishes a new defined land use goal 20, to increase attention to climate needs and equity issues in Oregon's land use planning .

My name is Dennis Reynolds, I am a retired Unitarian Universalist minister living in Eugene. I am here as an individual and representing the Challenging Racism working group of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, and Eugene Interfaith Earthkeepers both of whom support this legislation.

I have lived most of my life in Oregon, growing up in rural Oregon and in Salem. I moved to Eugene to attend the University and, in time, went to work at the U of O as a preschool teacher and later as the administrator of a student services child care program. I retired from the U of O after 32 years in 2009 and began my late in life career in ministry.

In my ministry career, I mostly served congregations on the Puget Sound north of Seattle. There I observed first hand the impacts of inadequate land planning, processes that have historically lacked the planning that I had long treasured in my native states.

I have long been proud of the planning process that strong bipartisan effort created back in the 1970's. I all too often took the impacts of that planning for granted until I saw what happens when such comprehensive planning has not been in place.

Outside of Port Townsend Washington, where I served my ministerial internship, I saw significant residential developments far outside the city core and the reach of sewage systems. On nearby Whidbey Island, where I served for six years, I saw similar isolated development in disregard of anything resembling urban growth boundaries and very limited controls of water front development, including limited restriction of building on unstable high bank waterfront properties. These shortsighted developments have created significant pollution within the Sound and other problems.

The differences I saw between there and my home state was significant, demonstrating that land use planning works.

I retired back to Eugene in late 2018. Shortly after I came home, I was shocked to read in the Register Guard about an 18 year difference in life expectancy between the east of campus area, where I have been blessed to build a home, and northwest Eugene neighborhoods. Those latter neighborhoods are the location of most of the toxic emitting businesses in Lane County and also is the neighborhood with the highest local concentration of people of color.

Poor land use planning, deadly zoning, that ignores issues of equity worsens, the realities experienced by marginalized communities.

Past experience have shown that Oregon's land use planning works.

But is has not been as effective as needed for addressing climate change and the meeting the needs of marginalized communities.

Goal 20, as proposed in HB 2488, would both make climate needs a priority and concurrently help us rectify past inequities.

Please assure that our planning processes work for our climate and for ALL Oregonians by passing HB 2488-2.

Thank you for your attention and your work to serve our state.

Respectfully
Reverend Dennis Reynolds