

Letter in Opposition to HB 2560

Honored Legislators,

I am writing on my own behalf to ask you to carefully assess the context and implication of **HB 2560** and then **vote NO and address the real problems listed below.**

Why is this bill being advanced?

To enhance the capability of citizen lobbyists tuned to the dog whistles of professional lobbyists to influence Oregon legislators during all public meetings.

As conveyed in their January newsletter, 1000 FO placed this “improved” access at the top of their agenda in addition to training 50 new land use advocates added to their network of allied special interest groups.

The Irony

HB 2560 does nothing to improve the ability of citizens in general to be more informed about bills or to participate in policy formulation. As you know there is almost **no press coverage** of the Oregon legislature. Public awareness of any bills under consideration approaches 1% of Oregonians at best.

HB 2560 fails to improve general engagement with the legislative process or access to the OLIS website in order to testify. Providing testimony or comment requires special training and knowledge:

1. to find proposed bills. Since the proposed legislature is only listed by number, not grouped by general topic or area of influence, and
2. to understand the bill. “Summaries” of each bill only hint at the substance in the bills found only by opening and reviewing the full text, and
3. to know which committee is handling the bill and then guessing at what time and date determines when testimony may be received and accepted, and
4. after locating the Committee and the time and date, to find at the bottom of the page where to click to submit testimony, and
5. to be vigilant in tracking the timing of meetings regarding bills. These are often unpredictable and may be announced publicly within a few hours – **only on the OLIS website and only to those aware that they must be subscribed to be informed.** Moreover, only those familiar with the legislative process know the difference between a “work session” and a “hearing” and the timing for a vote.

With all the **talk** of being inclusive with every minority and disadvantaged person, HB 2560 simply expands access to the same technically sophisticated, electronically connected folks that are paid to set the legislative agenda in motion, monitor progress, and manage testimony.

It is particularly ironic that 1000 FO is driving HB 2560. Specific to land use, HB 2001, SB 458 and several related 1000 FO bills are being advanced in the Oregon legislature. Why? Specifically **to dodge the public processes** built into of **SB 100** and **Oregon Land Use Planning Goal 1**. This Goal requires public notice and local engagement in the formulation of Comprehensive Plans and zone changes and participation in local regulation of land use decisions even at the neighborhood level. Repeating the strategies employed in the 2019 legislative sessions, advocates are wielding a double edged sword -

advancing their agenda via city planning staff with one edge while using the legislature to **bypass required local government** processes with the other. While local governments are relieved of accountability, home owners and other stakeholders are deprived of their rights under Oregon law.

What to do

Sideline this bill and instead address the real problems- the 5 issues plus public awareness identified above.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to an ongoing dialog on these and other issues.

Rod Merrick, AIA
ENA Board President
(via email)