



May 4, 2021

Marty Wilde, Chair
House Committee on General Government
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Wilde, Vice-Chairs Leif and Lively, and Members of the Committee,

The City of Springfield appreciates the opportunity to share with the committee our concerns with SB 299, which authorizes the creation of children's service districts and provides them with the authority to levy permanent property taxes. First and foremost, the City supports efforts to provide enhanced services for children, however, we do not believe those services should be built on the back of a broken property tax system.

As you know, property tax revenues are vital for local governments and are the largest single source of revenue supporting Springfield's core services. The creation of a new district that would receive a portion of the property tax revenue could reduce the availability of funds for other critical city services like public safety and fire. In fact, the City of Springfield is already reliant on two operating levies that are critical to maintaining police and fire services at their current levels. With the limits imposed by Measure 5, those two levies are currently experiencing compression, which would be further exacerbated by the creation of another taxing district. And while these are 5-year levies, operating levies have been foundational to maintaining service levels for the last 18 years.

Local jurisdictions are reeling from the impacts of the pandemic; we are experiencing reductions in revenue almost across the board. Federal funding has and will help alleviate some of those impacts, but the past year and a half has made the cracks in our system even more evident. We would ask that the Legislature not cause additional undue harm to what revenue we have left.

The City of Springfield respectfully requests that you oppose SB 299. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nathan Bell
Finance Director
City of Springfield