

Submitter: Dani Schulte
On Behalf Of: self
Committee: House Committee On Housing
Measure: HB4118

Dear Committee,

I have reviewed Bill 4118 and find it to be a terrible solution to the housing problems facing Oregonians, and especially to solving the issue of "affordable" or "workforce" housing. Cities across the state already struggle to cover the cost to maintain our existing infrastructure - roads, water and sewer systems go long past their design lifespan because their jurisdictions cannot afford to maintain them on schedule. I live in an area that had a bridge collapse during the February 2020 flood which had been identified as failing infrastructure for 20 years, but which the county could not afford to replace. This addition to sprawl will exacerbate those problems, creating more extensive infrastructure on urban fringes with few tax payers to pay for that long-term maintenance.

Furthermore, the amendment proposed to section 1, creating a taskforce to review the limitations on housing, industrial and manufacturing development and natural disasters, is far too broad in scope to be adequately addressed by one committee. The list of committee members included clearly biases the interests of property owners and developers, with zero seats, let alone a balanced proportion of seats, dedicated to representation of the interests of low-income residents, renters, BIPOC communities, or people who are dependent on non-car transportation, who would certainly be disadvantaged by a sprawl approach to increasing housing.

Any housing proposal that sincerely hopes to address the needs of Oregon's workforce housing constraints needs to focus on infill, increasing urban density, and increasing incentives to building smaller and more affordable units. This is not only critical to providing genuinely affordable workforce housing that does not generate transportation cost burdens, but it is also critical to the responsible use of tax dollars to rebalance public infrastructure budgets and right-size cities. Single family residential lots are not affordable. Sprawling new roads, sewer, water, electricity and broadband service networks are not affordable. Creating new car-dependent neighborhoods is not affordable. Prioritizing the voices of home owners and developers will not lead to affordable workforce housing.

A better proposal would include:

- creating sizeable financial incentives for infill and ADU development, such as permit fee or tax waivers
- additional home buyer assistance for home buyers who purchase or build two- or three-unit homes

- allowing up to 4 units in all urban zones currently exclusively single family residential (mirroring the International Building Code cut line dividing residential from commercial development standards)
- providing additional transit funding to cities that eliminate off-street parking requirements in transit corridors
- continuing to preserve critical and irreplaceable farm and forest land for food and natural resource generation and local industry protection