

Submitter: Kathryn Jernstedt  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Housing  
Measure: HB4118

Friends of Yamhill County strongly opposes HB 4118 and the proposed -1 amendment. It perpetuates the false notion that just adding more land means houses will be more affordable. Building outside existing public services adds development costs that drive the price of housing beyond the range of middle, much less affordable housing. Families thrive when they are in communities with schools, libraries, groceries, walkable neighborhoods, and the other elements at the core of UGBs.

HB 4118 as drafted circumvents the established and tested planning system dating back to SB 100.

- It leap-frogs over Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) planning and development into the Urban Reserve Area (URA), not intended for development until after the 20-year supply inside the UGB is utilized.
- It overrides the community process by which these areas are designated.
- The truncated timeline for providing urban services – within two years of approval – is not realistic in light of the planning, engineering, funding, and construction to make the best use of public funds.
- The language includes poorly defined terms and processes that many local jurisdictions are not equipped or funded to implement, i.e.
  - ? “workforce” whether in the context of housing or commercial use lacks clarity or statutory authority,
  - ? it lacks clarity on the legal basis for a city to hold or enforce “a covenant on the land” for a duration of 30 years or more,
  - ? there is no mechanism for funding compliance and enforcement actions.

The -1 amendment replaces the original bill language with the formation of a task force with the even more expansive charge “Housing, Industrial and Manufacturing Development. The proposed membership falls far short of including all of the technical skills or stakeholders to do justice to the task. Ostensibly limited to UGB and URA it still has impacts on working lands and resource zones by fragmenting those areas, particularly within the URA. State funding and tax abatement touches on every citizen and community.

The very concepts put forward in HB 4118 and A-1 are contrary to the reasonable scope and expectations of a “Short Session”. It unnecessarily pits two good things against one another: housing and farmland. The mechanisms proposed have no track record of containing housing costs. A pilot program with similar objectives was passed a few sessions ago. The fact that the two communities that applied are in the

early stages of the projects should be noted for two particular reasons. First, there is no simple or quick fix. Secondly, more time is needed to gather data and learn the lessons from the pilot program. We respectfully request your no vote on the bill and A-1.

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