

Representative Julie Fahey, Chair
House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature

Re: Opposition to HB 4118

Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee,

The Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium (MMC) represents the mayors of 25 cities in the Portland Metro Area, collectively home to over 1.7 million Oregonians. The mayors of the MMC write to express their opposition to HB 4118, which would require local governments, if petitioned, to expand their urban growth boundaries to include land designated as urban reserve that supports workforce housing and commercial development supportive of workforce housing.

Housing affordability was already a monumental challenge that has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and as mayors, we are constantly seeking ways to improve housing stability in our communities. However, the MMC has serious concerns about the way in which HB 4118 would undermine our state's land use planning process by requiring cities to make land use decisions without giving our residents the opportunity to have any input into the planning of their communities. The bill would functionally transfer primary decision-making authority from the elected public bodies of our region to any private landowner of any plot urban reserves in the metro area. The mayors of the MMC believe strongly that local governments and their residents should have a say in the land use decisions that impact our communities.

The mayors are also concerned that HB 4118 could exacerbate some of the existing systemic inequities that we are working to combat in our cities. By allowing land on the outward edges of our communities to be developed for affordable housing without consideration of the availability of transit routes, social services, and critical retail like grocery stores, the bill runs the risk of creating new car-dependent suburbs and food deserts for lower-income residents in search of affordable housing. While the creation of new affordable housing stock is important, the MMC would prefer to see development that integrates affordable housing into our communities in ways that allow residents to better avail themselves of critical services while also minimizing increased congestion.

While the mayors of the MMC appreciate the value of convening a broad stakeholder group focused on ensuring that our state has enough land available for affordable housing and industrial development, we are not sure that the -1 amendment to HB 4118 is the right approach. The MMC would suggest that this conversation be handled more regionally to better address the unique needs and considerations in the urban, coastal, and eastern parts of the state. Additionally, while affordable housing and

Mayor Lacey Beaty

City of Beaverton

Mayor Brian Hodson

City of Canby

Mayor Jeffrey Dalin

City of Cornelius

Mayor Gery Schirado

City of Durham

Mayor Brian Cooper

City of Fairview

Mayor Peter Truax

City of Forest Grove

Mayor Travis Stovall

City of Gresham

Mayor Tom Ellis

City of Happy Valley

Mayor Steve Callaway

City of Hillsboro

Mayor Jaimie Fender

City of King City

Mayor Joe Buck

City of Lake Oswego

Mayor Mark Hardie

City of Maywood Park

Mayor Mark Gamba

City of Milwaukie

Mayor Teri Lenahan

City of North Plains

Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith

City of Oregon City

Mayor Ted Wheeler

City of Portland

Mayor Walt Williams

City of Rivergrove

Mayor Keith Mays

City of Sherwood

Mayor Jason Snider

City of Tigard

Mayor Randy Lauer

City of Troutdale

Mayor Frank Bubenik

City of Tualatin

Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle

City of Vancouver (ex officio)

Mayor Jules Walters

City of West Linn

Mayor Julie Fitzgerald

City of Wilsonville

Mayor Scott Harden

City of Wood Village

industrial land issues are interrelated, trying to address both issues together in a single interim task force may be ambitious to the point of impeding meaningful progress on either issue.

The MMC urges the Committee to not move forward with HB 4118. We appreciate the efforts made the by the Oregon Legislature to address our state's affordable housing crisis, but we are concerned that HB 4118 goes too far in undermining Oregon's land use system and its public process.

Sincerely,

The Mayors of the MMC