

Submitter: Guy Benn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB3414

Land use provisions are important and should not be waived because they are inconvenient. Big changes like the ones proposed erode decades of careful planning and have irreversible consequences. Here are some key reasons this bill is wrong;

* The dash-17 amendment to HB 3414 continues to ignore a major barrier to more diverse and affordable housing inside UGBs: lack of funding for infrastructure. Our communities already have a backlog of needs for new and upgraded sewers, sidewalks, and more. We have collectively failed to invest in needed infrastructure. Adding more land only exacerbates this challenge.

* The dash-17 amendment allows local governments to once again avoid rezoning land inside UGBs – the politically more difficult, but necessary, action – to allow more housing and to remove unnecessary local barriers to development. With 70 percent of all housing and all residential lands zoned for detached single-family housing – the most expensive and land-consuming type of housing – we can and must build better inside our UGBs, by allowing even more housing types and more affordable housing.

* We have underused land inside our UGBs that should be converted to housing. For example, currently, we have more parking spaces for cars than we have housing for people, yet we have vast areas of underused parking lots and strip malls. We must make it easy to convert those to housing.

Making it easier to expand outward makes it harder to address climate change and to reduce fire risk. Paving over more lands, adding more roads, and expanding into the wildland-urban interface will only increase these problems.