

Submitter: Michael Eng

Committee: House Committee On Rules

Bill: HB 3414, dash 17 amendment

I am very concerned that the Oregon legislature is considering undermining Goal 14 of Oregon's far-sighted land use planning system, one of the state's bedrock policies for preventing urban sprawl, while also preserving open space and agricultural lands for the long-term benefit of all Oregonians.

I strongly oppose the dash 17 amendment to HB 3414, which would allow all cities in Oregon a one-time expansion of their urban growth boundaries (UGBs) and thereby subverting land use laws that have been essential for maintaining quality of life for all Oregonians.

This proposed amendment is disingenuous in claiming it is aimed at addressing the state's housing shortage. Consider where the proposal is coming from and what their true incentives and motivations are. Using the genuine state-wide public policy challenge of effectively addressing our housing shortage is a ruse for promoting the amendment advocates' own narrow financial self-interests, which should not be conflated with the public's interest.

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.

Furthermore, expansion of UGBs will also likely exacerbate the huge backlog of needed infrastructure improvements to municipal water and sewer systems, roads, sidewalks, etc., which is already preventing infill developments within UGBs.

Many Oregon communities have underused land within their UGBs, which should ideally be utilized for housing, before expanding UGBs.