



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 14, 2023

To: **Co-Chairs Sen. Dembrow and Rep. Pham and Members of the Committee**
[Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources](#)

Re: **[HB 5027](#) – Dept. of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Budget Bill – Comments**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon first studied land use in 1959 and has been active since in supporting our statewide land use planning program with local implementation. We believe that Goal 1 requires open access to the land use process and that all residents have a stake in the development of their communities. As we plan our cities and counties, we are deciding **where we will all live, work, shop, and play and how we'll get there.**

The League believes that the Department of Land Conservation and Development is critical to the health and well-being of Oregonians. Planning determines what kind of **infrastructure** communities will need. It helps assure our **natural areas** are protected, addresses **natural hazards** and that we have not only economically vital **agricultural and forest lands**, but lands for **other industrial uses. Most of all, this session we support this agency's work on housing and homelessness.**

We were engaged in the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) discussion back when it was considered in 2019 with [HB 2003](#). We provided [testimony](#) on the original bill and worked behind the scenes as the bill moved forward. We noted that the original “regions” designated in the bill might be problematic and, as the OHNA work moved forward, we appreciate that there is a recognition that data sets in many parts of the state make a more city-by-city approach more reasonable, except for Metro and perhaps Jackson County and Central Oregon where local governments have substantial relationships.

We note that League members participated in HB 2001 and HB 2003 rulemaking and work in local Leagues to implement a myriad of Housing Production Strategies at the local level. We served on the OHNA Housing Capacity Work Group. As we address the targets proposed in the OHNA, we support both addressing **houselessness**—the need to stop evictions and keep people in their homes with rental assistance—and **homelessness** where we need funding for multiple strategies to help with mental illness and addiction issues as well as transitional housing units. **The OHNA points out that about half the housing units needed will require subsidy. We encourage the Legislature to fund those units using a list of strategies in bills this session.**

We do have concerns with Package 91 as presented. It is unclear that the “Other Funds” in the budget coming from the Dept. of Consumer and Business Services will actually be available for this work. That agency budget is in a different Subcommittee so coordination in Full Ways and Means will be crucial. The staffing at DLCD to implement the OHNA and help local governments is needed. However, staffing is also needed for more than implementing the OHNA.

While we support the Governor's Executive Orders on housing and homelessness, **we hope the legislature expands on the funding for this agency.** As many of you have noted, small local governments benefit from the expert regional planning staff provided by DLCD. Local governments are still recovering from wildfires and a variety of natural hazards such as flooding.

The [Agency's Request Budget](#) included **staffing (POP 202) to address wildfire planning.** If not in this budget, we hope to see staffing added if this legislature requires additional work for DLCD as they help local governments and Oregonians prepare for future wildfire disasters as well as continued recovery from previous ones. In order to effectively mitigate future climate change driven geographic expansion of areas subject to wildfire risk, staff is needed to help coordinate management of that risk. Fires have burned in incorporated cities, in unincorporated towns and rural county areas and the mix of planning issues are as different as these jurisdictions. We note that both Co-Chairs cited the need to consider **where** we locate housing. POPs 202 and 209 below attempt to address that issue by providing planning assistance to local communities before disaster strikes.

That assistance is included in the **\$42,251 requested as federal match in POP 209—a mostly federally funded position to help cities and counties with floodplain and flood recovery planning.** Floods mean possibly relocating housing, such as happened in the Pendleton area. Director Bateman noted the link between this work and the potential for FEMA grants to local governments.

We also want to note the lack of funding for the position in **POP 212 to continue the climate adaptation work** that DLCD has led with 24-26 other agencies. The [guidance document](#) is done, but the implementation has just begun. **Planning at DLCD is about 19 Goals and linkages with all these other agencies.** Did we spend these last years working together to let this incredible collaboration sit on a shelf? The League believes that addressing climate change not only by reducing greenhouse gases, but also adapting to our inevitable changing future is critical to all of Oregon.

It is unclear that this budget includes adequate **all-important broader local government grant funding needed by jurisdictions to take on a variety of planning to help not only with the [Housing Goal](#) as well as address local community visions.** We know that many jurisdictions need to update their public facilities plans so they can access federal funds to add water, sewer, roads and other infrastructure needs in our many vacant urban growth boundary lands. Each jurisdiction needs different planning activities to meet those housing targets. Also, it will take the work of local residents to help assure that policies are adopted and implemented locally so **funding for public involvement is important.** Change is hard; we need to bring Oregonians along as we require new planning strategies. We also want to remind legislators that **local funding will be needed and local voters will need to support those requests.**

We appreciated Rep. Bobby Levy's advocacy for Oregon's farmlands and will continue to help others understand that such land is finite and feeds not only Oregonians but the world. And Rep. Owens' note that soil types are not the only measure of the value of those lands for agriculture.

Lastly, we appreciate Rep. Holvey's consistent focus on assuring that Oregon meets EPA and NOAA requirements around clean water in our Coastal Zone Management Area. (See LWVOR's [Coastal Study](#) for those boundaries.) Even though Oregon has increased focus on better septic programs and forestry practices, we continue to lose funding due to non-compliance. From LWVOR 2017 [letter](#) on DEQ's Budget ([SB 5518](#)) "*There have been questions in this committee related to the holdback of NOAA funds to the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development, as well as DEQ.*

Here are links to that issue: <http://coast.noaa.gov/czm/pollutioncontrol/> and <https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/pollutioncontrol/#Oregon>. As is true with some other water issues, the answers reside in another agency Board's (Board of Forestry) unwillingness to address the need for additional riparian setbacks and legacy logging roads in our coastal areas." We were hopeful that the new Private Forest Accord would address this issue.

A common theme of LWVOR testimony is agency collaboration and partnerships. This small agency is so critical to where we will all live, work, shop, play and how we'll get there that we hope this Committee is generous in your budget allocations.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



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