



Mark Meek
State Senator
District 20

February 16, 2023

TO: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

FROM: Senator Mark Meek

SUBJECT: Support for SB 630

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 630. I am excited to bring this concept forward this session.

Oregon has a housing crisis. To resolve it, we must enact creative, innovative policies that increase housing supply in all communities across the state – with an eye toward projects that are shovel ready.

SB 630 is a bill focused on the proposed Abernethy Green development in Oregon City. It would dedicate lottery-backed funding to a project that would establish more than 500 multi-family housing units on a 62-acre mixed-use development that would include retail, commercial, dining, family entertainment and many other community-focused amenities.

Abernethy Green is different from any other housing development in the state. This \$300+ million project would be developed on a site that is a former landfill. Between 1969-1983, 60% of the Portland metro region's garbage went into the Rossman Landfill on the north end of Oregon City. For forty years, this land – at a prime location within the urban growth boundary – has achieved nowhere near its best use.

To meet our state's housing supply goals, we must foster creative public-private partnerships. We also must recognize that there needs to be public support for unique projects that bring housing and economic development to Oregon communities.

The cost to clean up a de-commissioned landfill, provide long-term environmental mitigation, and address unique structural development work is significant. In the case of Abernethy Green, it is estimated to be more than \$45 million. These are additional costs that other housing development projects don't have.

Office of Senator Mark Meek
900 Court Street NE, S-417 • Salem, OR 97301
(503) 986-1720 • Sen.MarkMeek@oregonlegislature.gov

Projects such as these just won't pencil out unless public funds can support it. For this Abernethy Green project, proponents are looking at local urban renewal funds and federal grants – but the state has a stake in its success as well.

SB 630 would not only show the state's commitment to unique projects like these; it would also serve as a pilot project to inform other local governments and private partners that seek to develop similar sites on blighted lands within their UGBs.

We will have some interesting conversations this session about housing and industrial land development outside the urban growth boundary. However, this project is on prime land within the UGB. We should support unique projects that take blighted lands and turn them into thriving developments that benefit key communities.

You'll hear from Summit Development and its plans for Abernethy Green. You'll also hear about their work with DEQ to put together an extensive clean up and mitigation plan, which is outlined in a comprehensive Proposed Purchase Agreement with the agency. The plans outlined in the PPA create a roadmap for the development to be done in the right way to ensure the health and safety of those living in housing at Abernethy Green, as well as those who visit or work in the commercial and community areas of the site.

One key aspect of this legislation is a requirement that Summit, once the project is complete, write a report to the state on best practices for developing housing on a formal landfill. We hope this will inform future developments that wish to turn brownfields into productive community uses. I'm also thrilled that the developer has committed to price up to half of the new housing within the affordable threshold of 80% medium family income for Clackamas County.

This development is important for Oregon City, Clackamas County, and the entire region. It is important to the State of Oregon. We need housing at all price points.

Oregon has an urgent need to create more housing options. Unique projects like Abernethy Green won't happen without a public-private partnership, including funding support. SB 630 is a positive step in that direction, and I ask the committee to pass this important bill to the Ways & Means Committee.

Respectfully,



Mark Meek
State Senator – Oregon Senate District 20