

Submitter: William Evans
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4026

I write in OPPOSITION to the -1 Amendment of HB 4026, which bans the use of citizen referenda to challenge Urban Growth Boundary expansions and makes this provision retroactive to January 1, 2023.

Citizen referenda is used when citizens disagree with the decisions of the jurisdiction or feel shut out of the decision-making process. No community of people will go to the trouble of qualifying and supporting a referendum unless they believe serious community harm is at stake. We the people need to retain our constitutional rights to include the option for citizen referenda.

An open public process for land use and planning for citizens within and outside city boundaries is critical. I grow crops on farmland classified as “prime farm soils” as defined by the Oregon State University County Survey Soil Report and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Reports. This prime farmland is located near the proposed North Plains UGB expansion in Washington County. Government needs to prioritize our environment and natural resources to preserve these prime soils for feeding Americans and the people around the world. When cities seek to expand their UGB, they need to consider the impacts they create with urban sprawl onto valued farmland. Farmland is limited and once this is developed, it will be gone forever.

Please vote “no” on the -1 Amendment of HB 4026 and allow citizen referenda to be the voice of the people.