

Public comment on HB2422

“Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness, thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2400

I am strongly in favor of Oregon building more low-income and affordable housing, **however, not at the expense of Oregon gutting land use laws and allowing development that isn't subject to protecting our important farmland and forestry. This bill would allow haphazard higher-density rural land upzoning and likely make all or many of Oregon's current land use protections unenforceable.**

HB 2422 would attempt to create sprawl from the outside in by allowing counties to bypass land use laws to more than double the density of certain rural lands with case-by-case rezoning. It also bypasses critical systems that ensure everyone, not just well-financed individual landowners, have access to the planning process. Our land use planning program intentionally includes safeguards, encouraging development where it is less costly, where sufficient infrastructure exists, where people have access to equitable transportation options, and where agricultural and forestry operations won't be impacted. This bill encourages Oregon to ignore unintended negative consequences on our precious resources.

The bill would authorize counties to more than double the dwelling density on rural lands where it is currently limited to one house per 2.5 acres, increasing it to one house per 1 acre without taking an exception to Goal 14 – as is required under existing law.

A planned approach to increasing residential densities requires counties to consider:

- Whether the increased rural development will be more difficult and costly to serve;
- Whether there is sufficient infrastructure in place to serve more than twice as many new homes;
- The transportation implications of doubling the amount of houses in rural areas;
- Whether the increased development will negatively impact surrounding agricultural and forestry operations;
- Whether the increased density would make future urban growth boundary expansions more difficult and costly, if not impossible.

This bill bypasses the benefits of requiring counties to plan for additional rural development through the exceptions process, or through the Big Look provisions of ORS 215.788.-794, both of which ensure any increased densities will not have unintended negative consequences on Oregon's precious resources. These planning processes also ensure an equal playing field where everyone, not just well-financed individual landowners, have access to the planning process. **This would be a VERY negative consequence for Oregon.**

I am in favor of increasing housing production but not at the expense of Oregon's existing land use laws and protections. This will be a negative effect for all of us in the long run if you approve this

bill as currently written. YES to smart growth inside cities and towns, where infrastructure costs are lower and where people can best access schools, jobs, and services. NO to bad bills that reduce Oregon's unique land use planning system that has been preserving a legacy that has built a strong economy for Oregon around products like Oregon wines, produce and agro-tourism. **Please go back to the drawing board to find other ways to gain the housing we need. This bill is not meeting Oregon values in doing so.**

Jennifer Valentine

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