

Public comment on HB2316

“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. HB 2316 overrides all land use laws to open up publicly owned lands outside urban growth boundaries to sprawling, expensive development. This is terrible and has a long-reaching impact.**

Let's solve housing problems another way. Let's build more in-urban growth boundary houses that are low-income housing, or incentivize developers to do so. Let's build public or habit for humanity type housing, or buy old housing and rehab it. Most people need homes close to jobs and transportation. Let's not make everyone buy cars and have to drive in to jobs adding to climate challenges.

HB 2316, with its focus on lands outside UGBs that have no infrastructure and goals to build only detached dwellings, is very expensive, farther from the things people need, and ignores that many of these lands include sensitive natural resources and are active recreation areas. This bill's focus on building housing for people with middle and lower incomes is better directed inside cities and towns, because Oregonians need housing near schools, stores, and services. We have thousands of vacant acres inside our UGBs, including publicly-owned lands, that are suitable for housing but need an extension of a road or some pipes. We should focus investments and policy changes on housing for all in these places. Let's give towns money to turn existing land into housing for those who need low-income options. Let's give towns options to buy existing run-down properties and rehab them for subsidized resale or low-rent options. Oregon should put its money in these places, not give out license to gut land use to development at odds with Oregon values to protect our valuable natural resources, farm and forest land, clean water and such.

We should look at surplus public lands inside UGBs for housing development – where people can walk to school, see their neighborhood doctor, pick up produce from the corner grocer, and live within a thriving community. Lands outside our cities and towns will require significant infrastructure costs to become viable for building homes, and this bill would unnecessarily burden the state with those costs – before housing is even built. There are smarter, more affordable ways to build housing.

I do support smart investment in housing solutions, this is not that.

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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