

Submitter: Robert Emmons
On Behalf Of: LandWatch Lane County
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2422

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness:

Please accept the following comments on my own behalf and on behalf of LandWatch Lane County, the 501(c)3 non-profit I head. LandWatch has worked for almost 30 years with neighbors throughout Lane County to protect farm and forest land, natural areas and open spaces.

When I came to Oregon from the deep south in 1965, I fell in love with the character and beauty of this state. And I was amazed and gratified to learn that statutory efforts were underway to protect the qualities responsible for my affection and sorely missing in the states I'd left behind. I was even more amazed to learn that those efforts were led by a Republican governor and other advocates who not only shared my zeal but were busy building a base for the legislation that resulted in SB 100 and became a model for land use protection nationwide.

Unfortunately, from its inception Oregon's vaunted land use program was under assault from the same development interests that have led to House Bills 2316, 2400 and 2422. The proposed changes in these bills are not subtle; rather, they would override the fundamental protections in our system of goals and regulation, particularly Goal 14, intended to contain urban style development within Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs).

Exploiting Governor Kotek's intention to provide extensive opportunities for "affordable" housing, HBs 2316, 2400 and 2422 would in fact allow unaffordable luxury homes and an unaffordable removal of rural lands protection. This will result in inequitable, expensive and irreversible impacts on farms, forests, wildlife habitat, water resources and increasing transportation and infrastructure costs, greenhouse gas emissions and rural gentrification.

We recognize that with the challenges presented by these bills nothing less than the health and integrity of Oregon's lands and land use protection program will depend upon your decision. Therefore, we ask that you adhere to the fundamental principle inherent in our land use system to contain urban style development, such as the proposed bills would permit on one-acre lots, within UGBs. Fortunately, to that end, there are thousands of acres of land, and buildings that could be repurposed for housing, already available in our urban areas. Please vote no on House Bills 2316, 2400 and 2422.

Thanks for your hearing on these bills and for the opportunity to address them.

Sincerely,

Robert Emmons, President
LandWatch Lane County