

Submitter: Annis Henson
On Behalf Of: environmentalists in C. Oregon
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2422

Hello and Good Morning, Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and House Comm on Housing and Homelessness members: I appreciate this chance to provide input for HB 2422 that intends to increase housing in rural areas, presumably affordable housing which Deschutes County desperately needs.

Nonetheless, having witnessed the benefits of our LCDC these past 50 years, I oppose this ill-considered new measure. As field staff for Habitat for Humanity Western States before retirement, I marveled at what a fantastic job Oregon was/is doing to conserve our rural land for agriculture, open space for recreation and wildlife. Our HFHI regional office was set in Bend. This observation was especially startling in comparison to our neighbors in Idaho and Washington, as well as in Montana and California. Driving through land in those states I continually saw land that could have been saved but witnessed instead sprawl and unorganized development; much was spread out over prime farm and ranch land. I observed the same when I flew over the western states to my next week's destinations.

In my work with local Habitat affiliates I know what works well for low-income Habitat homeowner families. And for countless organizations working hard to meet needs for these specific parts of our population. Living inside Oregon UGBs makes for more affordable land for qualified homeowners as well as the recognized benefits of being close to work, stores, schools & transit. It is possible to insist upon more affordable housing AND maintaining our LCDC success.

Therefore, do not pass this measure out of committee; please don't concentrate on allowing county governments to more than double housing density in our remaining rural lands. It seems a fool-hearted idea to allow this change without taking an exception to the crucial Goal 14 required now. From one house per 2.5 acres would increase the density to 1 house per acre. Our County Commission needs to stick to current LCDC regulations. The Deschutes Commission is working on another solution: allowing expansion of Safe Parking programs within the county. My congregation & others know this works as we see individuals and families move from their small but safe places on our land, to better living situations.

Lastly, we have Oregon planning processes in place that are worth keeping. Without going into important provisions like Big Look of ORS 215.788-794, those processes not only deal with unintended bad consequences for our natural resources but also legally provide equal "playing fields" so that all have access to planning – not just the wealthiest landowners among us - now and into the future.

Thank you for considering my brief input into your decision processes for HB2422; otherwise becoming known as an unwise path to haphazard higher density upzoning in our remaining rural land.

Gratefully,

Annis Henson, Bend, OR