Submitter: Kristi Newton

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2316

To Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Committee Members:

I urge you to OPPOSE HB 2316-1, which would allow housing development on state-owned lands outside urban growth boundaries (UGBs) by designating them as "Home Start Lands."

While I appreciate your concern for seeking solutions to Oregon's housing shortage, this bill, as written, is counter to Oregon's land use planning system, and creates concerns about responsible land use, infrastructure costs, and the well-being of Oregon communities.

Circumventing Land Use Protections – HB 2316-1 overrides critical state and local land use laws, including PROTECTIONS for natural resources. It gives the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) discretion to designate lands as "Home Start Lands," even if they serve important conservation or public purposes. Allowing development on lands managed by ODF, ODFW, DSL, ODOT, and OPRD undermines the very safeguards that protect Oregon's natural heritage. Promoting development outside of cities will increase greenhouse gas emissions, will increase the risk of wildfire, and will strain rural infrastructure. This is NOT the Oregon way.

Isolating Affordable Housing – The bill promotes housing development outside of cities and towns, creating enclaves of low- and moderate-income residents disconnected from jobs, schools, and essential services. This is a flawed approach to addressing Oregon's housing crisis, as it places vulnerable communities in isolated areas with limited access to transportation and economic opportunity. Affordable housing is just one component of the end goal of affordable living and complete communities.

Significant Infrastructure Costs – Extending infrastructure such as water, sewer, and emergency services to these remote locations would be costly and inefficient. At a time when cities and towns are struggling to provide essential services within existing UGBs, diverting resources to develop state-owned lands outside urban areas is fiscally irresponsible.

This -1 proposal does not provide a sustainable or equitable solution to Oregon’s housing challenges. I respectfully urge the Committee to reject this bill as written and consider ways to focus tools like this within UGBs to promote affordable housing within well-planned, connected communities.

Sincerely,
Kristi Newton