



March 31, 2025

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

Monmouth has an extremely **constrained housing land supply** as witnessed by the small number of lots available to build on at any given time. We continue to see more households paying over 30 percent of their income on housing costs as exhibited by the City being listed as the **8th most recent burdened city** in Oregon.

Our land supply while appearing sufficient on paper, is essentially locked by 3 large land owners located inside of our Growth Boundary that refuse to annex and develop their property for needed housing. We believed the “**Alternative UGB Land Exchange**” process provided in **SB 1537** last session would solve this issue, but unfortunately, upon a closer read of the bill, we are not eligible for the expedited process because Monmouth is completely surrounded by resource land, and resource land is not eligible to be exchanged under this process. State statute also provides a **traditional UGB** adjustment process, but based upon previous city experiences, that process is **extremely time consuming and expensive**, especially for a small city with 1.8 FTE planning staff. In the best-case scenario the traditional process would take 2 years, or longer in the event of an appeal, and cost \$25,000 or more to prepare the paperwork associated with the process. Including the time it takes to annex and permit property for development, the City is looking at a 3-4 year lead-time for preparing land for development. We cannot wait that long given the current housing crisis that we are facing.

To address this issue, HB 2647-3 would allow Monmouth to utilize the “Alternative Land Exchange” process approved for other cities under SB 1537. The bill would allow the city to remove 90 acres of land from its UGB that is bisected by a fish-bearing creek, floodplain and wetlands, which make serving this property with infrastructure very difficult and unlikely to occur since it is not cost effective. Additionally, the landowner has indicated they have no desire to ever annex and develop their property for housing development. The land removed would be **exchanged** with a smaller amount of land (**75 acres**) that is **contiguous** with the city limits, has **utilities readily available** to serve it, and does not contain a stream or mapped flood hazard area. In addition, the **owner supports** annexing their property for development in the immediate future, and the land would be brought in under a zoning that allows **middle housing development** at a density of 7 to 14 dwelling units per acre.

I’m proud to serve alongside a dedicated group of leaders and community members that want to be a part of the housing shortage solution, and not a part of the problem. We need your help in addressing one of the most important ingredients to building more housing, and that is **increasing the land supply in a timely and cost efficient manner**. HB 2647-3 will not only increase the supply of residentially zoned land that allows for middle housing types, but do so in a more sustainable manner that reduces environmental impacts and protects critical natural resources.

Thank you for your service to our state,

Suzanne Dufner,
Community and Economic Development Director