

April 16, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

RE: HB 3499 - Oppose

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **testimony in opposition to HB 3499** on behalf of Central Oregon LandWatch (LandWatch). For over 35 years, LandWatch has been working to ensure Central Oregon's livable future. We do this by creating well-planned and well-built cities with Complete Communities, preserving farmland, and protecting wild, open spaces.

HB 3499 would require the approval of an urban renewal plan by the electors of a municipality proposing a plan or a substantial amendment to an urban renewal plan. **This creates an unnecessary barrier that would limit the use of a proven, effective tool cities can use to help spur economic development, build more housing, and revitalize and improve their communities.**

Urban Renewal Areas (URA) use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to reinvest or rebuild parts of cities that are physically deteriorated, economically stagnated, unsafe or where the old urban layout no longer works. Tax Increment Finance (TIF) is a mechanism for capturing the future tax benefits of real estate improvements, in order to pay for the present cost of those improvements.

In Bend, a URA/TIF area is created through a robust process that includes community input, notice to and coordination with taxing jurisdictions, and review by Bend Urban Renewal Agency, the Planning Commission, Deschutes County Commission, and the Bend City Council. Establishing Bend's most recent Core Area URA was a process years in the making that was catalyzed and pushed forward by the local community. The wave of community momentum and support led to the City of Bend creating a plan and the Core Area Urban Renewal Area (URA) to help provide a critical funding mechanism to turn the community's vision for the Bend Central District as a complete, vibrant, mixed use neighborhood into reality.

Cities have limited tools and options available to help their cities grow well, with intention, and in ways that can deliver abundant housing within Complete Communities. Urban Renewal is among the most powerful and effective of these existing tools. This bill would unwisely and unnecessarily restrict the use of URAs - and that is not in service to Oregon's communities.

Therefore, we urge you to *not* schedule a work session for HB 3499. Thank you for your service and consideration of this testimony.





2843 NW Lolo Drive., Ste. 200 | Bend, OR 97703

Phone (541) 647-2930

www.colw.org

Sincerely,

Corie Harlan

Cities & Towns Program Director



We defend and plan for Central Oregon's livable future