

County Commissioners
Danielle Bethell, Chair
Colm Willis
Kevin Cameron



Chief Administrative Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 16, 2025

Chair Representative Ben Bowman
Vice-Chair Representative Christine Drazan
Vice-Chair Representative Hai Pham
Members of the House Committee on Rules

RE: Support for House Bill 3499

Dear Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan, Vice-Chair Pham, and Members of the Committee:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes in strong support of House Bill 3499, which brings much-needed transparency, accountability, and community voice to the adoption and amendment of urban renewal plans in Oregon.

Urban renewal and tax increment financing (TIF) were designed to address blight and promote targeted reinvestment. However, in their current form, these tools often result in long-term diversions of property tax revenue from critical local services, such as schools, fire protection, libraries, and county law enforcement, without any formal input from the taxing districts that are financially impacted. This imbalance undermines fiscal planning and service delivery at the county level.

HB 3499 establishes reasonable and essential reforms:

- Voter approval is required before a municipality may adopt or significantly amend an urban renewal plan, ensuring that taxpayers have a direct say when their property tax dollars are at stake.
- Expanded public involvement provisions will promote transparency by requiring advance notice, hearings, and plan availability for review by residents, customers, and local taxing districts.
- For public building projects, HB 3499 requires concurrence from at least three of the four most affected taxing districts, mirroring current statutory safeguards and reinforcing local fiscal oversight.
- Enhanced transparency measures, including public notice of tax implications and maximum indebtedness, help ensure informed decision-making across all levels.

Marion County has experienced firsthand how urban renewal plans, in their current form, can strain our ability to fund essential services. The financial impacts are not theoretical, they are real dollars that could otherwise support sheriff's deputies, rural infrastructure, and community health

and safety. HB 3499 ensures that local governments cannot unilaterally commit shared public dollars to long-term debt obligations without broader consent.

While we support the bill as introduced, we also recognize the valid concerns raised by our counterparts in Jackson County. Expanding consent requirements to include the broader creation or amendment of any urban renewal plan, beyond just public building projects, would further strengthen local accountability. We encourage the Committee to consider this as a future step.

We urge the Committee to support HB 3499.

Sincerely,



Danielle Bethell
Chair



Colm Willis
Commissioner



Kevin Cameron
Commissioner