

April 24, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

RE: SB 1129A - Support

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **testimony in support of SB 1129A** 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.

LandWatch strongly supports the use of Urban Reserves. They provide more certain, efficient, and intentional future growth for our cities and towns which benefits the entire community, local governments, utility providers, and housing developers alike. Urban reserves can reduce the legal risk, cost, and time to adopt future UGB expansions, land for housing and jobs can be urbanized faster, and they facilitate longer-term infrastructure and public facilities planning. Thus, they are an important and powerful tool for cities to use.

For these reasons, for a number of years, LandWatch has been urging the Bend City Council to work with Deschutes County to establish an Urban Reserve, just like our neighbors have done in Redmond and Madras. We're encouraged to see direction from our local leaders that includes consideration of establishing an Urban Reserve for the City of Bend to follow our 20 year growth planning process, which is kicking off now.

As that effort gets underway, the City has identified some emergent concerns related to Urban Reserves and wants to ensure it is a tool that can be used effectively and with minimized legal risk in the process ahead.

SB 1129A has been created to respond to the City of Bend's concerns. And while we think that the existing process and rules for Urban Reserves are sufficient, we have participated in this process to move forward with what we see as a shared goal: **to ensure the City of Bend uses the Urban Reserves tool to help meet the housing needs of our community and ensure efficient urbanization and intentional growth into the future without altering the existing land priorities at OAR 660-021-0030(3).**

Therefore, we support SB 1129A. We appreciate the work by Senator Broadman, the City of Bend, and other interested stakeholders to refine and improve this bill. The adopted -1 removed Section 2 in the base bill and will use DLCD rulemaking to address the City of Bend's specific concerns. We prefer to see these issues addressed via DLCD's OHNA rulemaking currently underway that includes streamlining the urban reserves process, but understand existing scope





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and timelines may make that challenging. To be clear, while we're supportive of narrow rulemaking to improve the urban reserves process, we are not supportive of any statutory changes for Urban Reserves.

We also want to note that we need additional solutions beyond SB 1129A to address the issue of spot zoning on County lands (rezoning individual EFU- and Forest-zoned properties) - both adjacent to and farther from our Urban Growth Boundaries - and we look forward to working with the legislature on this issue in future legislative sessions.

Thank you for your service and consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Corie Harlan
Cities & Towns Program Director



We defend and plan for Central Oregon's livable future