

Subject: Strong Opposition to Senate Bill 974

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

My name is Scott Keyser, Mayor of the City of Molalla. I write to express my firm opposition to Senate Bill 974.

Since 2020, Oregon's cities - particularly smaller and rural ones like Molalla - have been inundated with unfunded mandates handed down by the state. From navigating the COVID-19 pandemic to addressing homelessness and the escalating housing crisis, local governments have been asked to do more with fewer resources, all while under increasing state oversight that erodes our ability to self-govern.

Senate Bill 974 represents yet another top-down mandate that infringes upon the principle of home rule. As a lifelong Oregonian, I find it deeply hypocritical that the Legislature often decries federal overreach while simultaneously imposing unsustainable burdens on its own municipalities. It is fundamentally inconsistent and damaging to the relationship between state and local governance.

Our city staff is working at capacity - managing daily operations while also developing housing and employment strategies, navigating the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) process, and overseeing three major infrastructure projects: a new police station, an upgraded wastewater treatment facility, and an expanded water system with new intake infrastructure. We are also planning a new community park to serve our growing population.

The additional administrative pressure created by SB 974's shortened development application timelines would be both unreasonable and unmanageable. It would likely require additional staffing,

extended council sessions, and budget reallocations - all of which are not feasible for a city of our size. This legislation may work for large urban jurisdictions, but for the majority of Oregon's communities - small, rural cities - this is impractical and potentially harmful.

I urge you to reject this bill and stand up for local authority. Cities are not the problem - we are the frontline. We are closest to the people, and we were elected to represent them. The erosion of home rule through legislation like SB 974 is not only shortsighted, it is counterproductive to the very goals the state seeks to achieve.

Please vote NO on Senate Bill 974.

Respectfully,

Scott Keyser

Mayor, City of Molalla