

Submitter: John Blumthal
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4113
Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Breese Iverson and Andersen, and Committee members:

HB 4113 would allow a county to site up to 960 units of housing on up to 250 acres outside a UGB somewhere in the state, including on farm and forest land. This development would be by a private developer who obtained a similar development right in 2009 that contained a fixed expiration date. That right has not been exercised during the intervening 17 years despite obtaining multiple deadline extensions. The termination date of the right was a condition of obtaining the right, and should be treated as a simple contract agreement, not as if that date was meaningless and the right is perpetual.

This bill contains several elements which compound the error of extending the life of the development right.

The development would be exempt from compliance with Oregon land use law, including all of the statewide land use planning goals, and it provides for no public participation in the county siting/approval process.

The county sprawl the bill would allow is likely to violate one or more of Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement), Goal 2 (Land Use Planning), Goal 3 (Agricultural Lands), Goal 4 (Forestlands), Goal 11 (Public Facilities and Services), and Goal 14 (Urbanization).

There are serious climate and wildfire safety issues, that were less understood 17 years ago, related to creating a new development that could house over 2,000 people on rural lands outside of cities. There are also important questions of city and county roles and obligations related to existing or newly required water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure as well as fire, police and infrastructure maintenance public services.

I appreciate this opportunity to let you know my opposition and reasoning, and I thank you for your serious consideration.

Sincerely,
John Blumthal