

Submitter: Austin Sumpter

Committee: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: Opposition to Senate Bill 1578

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development,

My name is Austin Sumpter. I live in the outskirts of Canby in rural Clackamas County, Oregon, specifically in Senate District 26 and House District 51. I testify today to express my opposition to Senate Bill 1578, a bill that aims to allow counties with low population densities to rezone up to 50 acres to be divided and developed for housing.

This bill is a Trojan horse that will override existing land use and environmental laws to rezone rural land and enable pockets of urban development outside of Oregon's urban growth boundaries (UGBs) designated under Senate Bill 100 (1973). The bill also fails to consider the impacts of allowing urban development far outside of incorporated cities—including increased service costs, increased vehicle miles traveled, and undermining density-based transit in existing cities, not to mention this bill would undermine the consideration of impacts of development pockets on farming, ranching, forestry operations, and wildlife risks. Increased residential development on working lands will also drive up land prices, making it much harder for the next generation of farmers, ranchers, and forest land managers to afford, and it would silence public input over how our communities can grow.

Ultimately, Senate Bill 1578 is unnecessary. Our state already has a sufficient process to plan new urban developments, which includes multiple pathways for housing on farm, ranch, and forest land, including for workers and family members. Especially at a time when public lands and environmental protections are under constant assault from the federal government. The last thing we need to do is weaken our own environmental and land use laws to ensure swift development of urban sprawl. Please oppose this bill.