



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OREGON

*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

August 7, 2017

To: Land Conservation and Development Commission  
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Re: LCDC 2017-19 Policy Agenda – **COMMENTS**

Commissioners:

The League supports our statewide land use planning program with local implementation. Both components are necessary for the success of the program. The League first studied land use in 1959 and has been active since in supporting our statewide land use planning program with local implementation. We believe that Goal 1 requires open access to the land use process and that all citizens have a stake in the development of their communities.

The League believes this department is critical to the health and wellbeing of Oregonians. As we plan our cities and counties, we are deciding where we will all live, work, shop, play and how we'll get there. As stated in your Strategic Plan: "*How communities are built and developed touches nearly every aspect of our lives*". That Plan also reminds the department of its role in **responding to climate change and natural hazards**, major concerns of the League. Planning determines what kind of infrastructure communities will need. It helps assure our natural areas are protected and we have not only economically vital agricultural and forest lands, but lands for other industrial uses.

The League recognizes that you need to respond to 2017 signed legislation and we would like to be actively engaged as you develop rules or respond in other ways to implement said legislation. As you know, we provided comments or otherwise engaged in many of those bills. Although we did not provide written comments to HB 2017, the Transportation Package, we are supportive of the goals, which include maintaining our current infrastructure, addressing bridge upgrades related to public safety and reducing greenhouse gasses by the emphasis on transit, bike and pedestrian movement, as well as increasing electric vehicle usage. The land use program should complement that package.

### **Ongoing Projects from the 2015-2017 Biennium**

- 1. Citizen Involvement and Land Use Program Outreach Improvements:** The League believes that it is time to reengage the entire Oregon citizenry about our award-winning statewide land use planning program and its links to environmental protection, as well as our economic well-being. We have attached the slide you use in your budget presentations and encourage building on that visual in order to remind Oregonians of the value of this program. Engagement with our civic and legislative leaders should be a part of that outreach. We encourage the Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee to develop an aggressive program of engagement. Use of local planning training meeting dates around the state could be considered or linked with this effort, as well as Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Meetings.
- 2. Rocky Shores Rulemaking:** The League is supportive of the Ocean Policy Advisory Council's efforts to update this section of the Territorial Sea Plan.

3. **Non-Resource Lands:** Because of the amount of resources needed to address this issue, the League supports again postponing this effort. We understand the value of developing this policy, but believe the department was not given the resources to do this important work, which include addressing carrying capacity, environmental and habitat protection. It took almost 9 years to try to address this issue in only 3 counties. Although much was learned in the Southern Oregon Pilot Project, this statewide project is too intensive (with the appropriate citizen engagement) since resources were not allotted by the legislature.
4. **Farmland Protection Improvements:** Should there be staffing and fiscal capacity, we support this work above the Non-Resource Lands project. We believe that both protection of our critical agricultural lands AND the need to assure those lands provide economic opportunities to our farmers and ranchers are important to Oregon. The request to review the cumulative impacts of non-farm uses might well fit into this effort. The League notes staff's capacity concerns, which is why we support this effort over #3 above.
5. **Metropolitan Transportation Rulemaking:** The League has been a proponent of this effort since its inception and we are pleased that the Commission has initiated rulemaking.

### **New Policy Projects Required by the 2017 Legislature**

As mentioned above, the League was engaged in many of these bills. Per your 2017 Land use Legislation document of July 24, the League is most interested in engaging in any rulemaking on SB 644, Non-aggregate Mineral Mining Permits and SB 1051, Housing Supply Bill. Should there be an interim work group on accessory dwelling units on rural residential lands, we are also interested in engaging in that effort. We have expressed to others our interest in the issue of removal-fill laws, particularly related to resource lands. We have been contacted regarding future implementation of HB 3249, the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Fund. Although it did not pass (and the League did not support), we are interested in any conversation around SB 432 and the challenges of Eastern Oregon cities related to their economic well-being. We are hopeful that broadband expansion and forest cooperatives funding will assist in their economic health. As other actions arise from 2017 legislation, we may be interested in helping to address those issues as well.

### **New Policy Projects Recommended by the Department**

1. **Simplified UGB – Minor Revisions:** The League dedicated many hours to help develop this policy and support efforts to address minor revisions that have been identified by potential city users of this process. We want cities to find this process useful and a savings of city resources, while providing a fair, equitable and citizen-led UGB expansion. Therefore, we support this rulemaking and are ready to help in this effort.
2. **Farm Capability Dwellings:** Not a priority of the League, however, we are compelled by the facts that the data currently used in this process is no longer available in a timely manner; therefore, we believe this issue should be considered, depending again on the staff and fiscal capacity of the department.
3. **Soils Classifier Qualifications:** We understand the arguments around expanding capacity for soils assessments, but we believe this issue is so important to protection of our farmland that we are not recommending addressing this issue this biennium and instead allowing the market to increase the number of competent soils scientists through our education system.
4. **Solar Siting on High Value Farmland:** We understand the concerns by the Board of Agriculture and 1,000 Friends so could support a review of the current rules, but, without staff and fiscal support, new rulemaking may overwhelm the department. Perhaps it would be helpful if the Governor supported a budget adjustment to all the state agencies which will need to engage in this effort in the 2018 session.

The League appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Commission as you consider your 2017-19 Policy Agenda. We regret that additional resources were not made available to the department in order to address the many important policies that would continue to update our statewide land use planning

program. But, since this is the case, we encourage your narrowing of projects so as to do appropriate justice to the ones selected, including assuring adequate and robust citizen involvement.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this important document. Let us know how we might help.



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cc: Jason Miner, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Manager

