



# Cascade Commentary

## QuickPoint! - Oregon needs more than tiny homes

By John A. Charles, Jr.

The 35-day session of the Oregon Legislature opened last week, and a hearing was held on the Governor's top priority, Senate Bill 1537. Her goal is to increase the supply of housing.

Unfortunately, this goal is undercut by Oregon's Urban Growth Boundaries, which are designed to limit urban growth. Under SB 1537, cities will be allowed to add tiny amounts of new land inside the boundary, but only if the proposed development meets stringent criteria.

In the Portland region, new neighborhoods will have to have at least 17 housing units per acre. That means most residents will be living in apartments.

The majority of Oregonians aspire to live in single family homes with a yard. Providing a housing solution that most people don't want is not a solution.

There is no policy reason for density mandates. Oregon is 98% open space and 2% developed. More than half the state is owned by the federal government, and those lands will remain open space. There is plenty of room for the kind of low-density housing that most people prefer.

Oregon's Urban Growth Boundaries have essentially created land cartels run by the government. The effect of any cartel is to make commodities both scarce and expensive. That certainly describes Oregon housing, and SB 1537 doesn't solve the problem.

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February 14, 2024

Word Count: 215

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