



# Oregon

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## Department of Land Conservation and Development

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### HB 2253

**What the Measure Does:** HB 2253 would establish that population forecasts for land use purposes for all cities and counties shall be produced by the Population Forecasting Center at Portland State University (PSU) under a continuing four-year cycle. The legislation would remove the current statutory obligation for counties to issue and coordinate population forecasts, and instead specify that the PSU forecast must be used. The legislation provides that issuance of the PSU forecast is not a "land use decision" subject to appeal. The forecasts produced by PSU would estimate 50-year population growth, but would also provide shorter-term incremental forecasts (for example, 1-, 10- and 20-year forecasts). The governor's proposed 2013-15 budget designates funding to PSU for its population forecasting responsibilities.

**Why this Measure is Needed:** Population forecasts are essential for long range land use planning. Under current Oregon law, each county is required to adopt a "coordinated population forecast" for the urban and rural areas in that county (except for jurisdictions in the Metro area – those jurisdictions receive population forecasts from Metro. This concept does not affect Metro's forecasting program and responsibilities). For a variety of reasons many counties have not adopted population forecasts or have not updated their forecasts for long periods of time. This has detrimental effects on planning for cities in those counties. State law currently requires cities to use the county's forecast for land use planning purposes, including amendments to urban growth boundaries (UGBs). Cities cannot update plans and UGBs without a reasonably current coordinated forecast, and in several counties the lack of up-to-date county forecasts has delayed critical land use planning for cities. A regular PSU forecast would solve this problem.

In addition, population forecasts are often expensive, controversial and subject to prolonged litigation, in large part because forecasting is connected to land use issues such as UGB planning. Population forecasting is costly to counties and cities, and to the state (the state provides grants to individual local governments for forecasts). These costs greatly increase with litigation, and there are additional undetermined costs due to delay of critical local planning. Currently, forecasting is done for multiple purposes by a large number of jurisdictions and agencies, resulting in duplication of effort and other cost-inefficiencies. Counties cite costs and delays as one of the reasons their required forecasts are done infrequently; often ten or more years will elapse between forecasts. Establishing a PSU program to issue forecasts on a regular four-year cycle will be much more cost effective for state and local governments.

**Funding:** Population forecasting has been supported by individual grants provided by the Department of Land Conservation and Development to individual counties, as well as local funding by cities and counties. This concept will instead direct a portion of DLCD planning grants to PSU rather than to individual local governments to support the issuance of forecasts.

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