

METOLIAN

Writer's Kit

AREA OF CRITICAL CONCERN BACKGROUND:

In December of 2006 Jefferson County adopted a new Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. The County implemented Goal 8 of the Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines (recreation) and identified two sites in Jefferson County as “destination resort eligible.” Since then the County’s adopted plan and code have been working through the appellate system, most recently making their way to the Oregon Supreme Court.

As mentioned above, the County’s decision is still working its way through the Planning System for resolution yet Governor Kulongoski requested the Department of Land Conservation and Development to create an Area of Critical Concern (ACC) that would cover the entire Metolius Basin. This ACC designation would prohibit resorts from the Metolius Basin despite Jefferson County’s economic policy decision to permit such uses on two discrete sites in the county. Unlike the other 8 counties in Oregon that have adopted resort-eligible maps, Jefferson County’s policy decision is being challenged by the Governor and legislators outside of the region.

Over the next few months the ACC issue will be debated in a number of public forums. Your support is sought to fight this unprecedented attack on Jefferson County’s ability to self-govern, the State’s Planning System and the Metolian project. Below are six major topics that are related to this issue. We encourage you to testify in opposition to this proposed designation. Please write a letter or email to one or all of the decision makers in this matter (listed at the end of this document) or attend the ACC hearings and testify in person. The following topics are provided to help frame your arguments:

TOPICS FOR LETTERS

Preserve Local Control. Local governments are best suited to resolve local issues. Jefferson County made a policy decision to add destination resorts as a possible use on two sites in the County. This was an economic development policy decision that 8 other Counties in Oregon have also adopted. The State has not stepped in to prohibit the siting of resorts in those Counties. Jefferson County should be no different.

Equity. Jefferson County followed the same rules (Oregon Revised Statute 197.455) in choosing its economic development policy as the other 8 counties in Oregon that permit resorts. The State was notified of the County’s intent to adopt such a map in April of 2006. The record for public comment on Jefferson County’s policy choice regarding siting of Destination Resorts closed in December 2006. Jefferson County needs to be held to the same standard as every other County in the state, not to arbitrary and capricious standards introduced into the process 2 years after the local government made its decision.

Need for Area of Critical Concern. The Governor continues to claim that this ACC designation is necessary to protect the basin from large scale development. However, there are no facts that support his claims. The letters he obtained from numerous state agencies do not describe a situation where carefully planned resorts will harm the Metolius River and the surrounding environment. Public policy needs to have a solid foundation in fact not emotion. There is no “smoking gun” identifying the demise of the basin due to careful resort development.

Economic Development. The Governor has encouraged sustainable and green technologies as well as tourism to provide a cornerstone of the State’s economic development plans. Over the past 20+ years Central Oregon has made a conscious decision to transition from its resource extractive roots to creating an economy that is largely focused on tourism. The witch hunt from legislators outside the Central Oregon region to curtail this area’s predominant industry is unacceptable.

New Approach to Development: The ACC designation and other proposed methods of prohibiting Metolian will kill the State’s (and the Nation’s) first resort that will build in sustainability from the start. Metolian will demonstrate how to layer different strategies to reduce and avoid adverse impacts while providing real capital to environmental projects within the basin through the Metolian Natural Capital Fund. No other development has provided this type of stewardship to an area that needs it. The budgets for state and federal agencies charged with managing the forest do not and will not contain the necessary capital to rehabilitate the basin. Metolian will demonstrate how development and environmental stewardship go hand in hand.

Certainty of Land Use System. Oregon’s legendary Land Use Planning System is viewed as a leader in the planning world. The approach recognizes that there are urban and rural issues that are best guided through Statewide Goals yet implemented locally to address issues and concerns. The Governor’s desire to implement the Area of Critical Concern shows he doesn’t support or trust the system that has been in place for 30 years. Further, this action sends a very bad message to local governments. Local jurisdictions can follow all of the state’s rules to adopt specific policy choices yet if certain politicians do not like the outcome of the process, the Governor and DLCD will step in to prohibit such policy. These types of action only introduce uncertainty and capriciousness into the State’s heralded land use system. This sets horrible precedent and undermines the legitimacy of the Oregon Planning System.

WHO TO CONTACT:

Elected Officials & Cabinet Members

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*Will serve as sub-committee members for initial ACC hearings.

Thank you for taking the time to review this material. We appreciate your interest and encourage you to write or testify on any of the issues raised in this document. Metolian takes its stewardship responsibilities very seriously and only wants what is best for the continued health of the basin. The ACC designation would prohibit Metolian from moving forward and leave the basin without the financial stewardship necessary to truly save the Metolius Basin.

For more information, please contact:

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