

# 1,000 Friends of OREGON NEWSLETTER

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## LCDC Keeps Tight Rein on Planning Extensions, Stresses Growth Boundaries and Farm Land Protection

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Over the course of 1974, the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) worked to adopt its statewide land use goals. Senate Bill 100 provides that Oregon's 36 counties and 230 cities must conform their comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to the goals by January 1, 1976, unless the county or city receives an extension beyond that date from LCDC.

1000 Friends of Oregon believes that whether the Senate Bill 100 program fails or succeeds in the next several years depends heavily on how carefully LCDC evaluates local efforts to comply with the goals, and on how effectively LCDC uses grant money, extensions and compliance schedules to produce complying plans and ordinances.

LCDC's first exercise of these crucial statutory powers has encouraged those who believe that vigorous local implementation of the goals will be good for the state of Oregon.

### LCDC Grants One-Year Extensions

On January 5, LCDC granted one-year planning extensions beyond the January 1 deadline to twelve local governments. In the process, LCDC gave clear directions for other cities and counties who soon will be seeking extra time to bring their land use plans into compliance with state-wide planning goals.

Eleven of the cities and counties who made up the first group to be reviewed by the Commission also received planning assistance grants from LCDC totaling \$234,732. The 1975 Legislature included \$4.4 million in LCDC's 1975-1977 budget for planning grants to local governments.

The twelve local governments were seeking "planning extensions" from LCDC under a provision of Senate Bill 100 which allows LCDC to grant a "reasonable extension of time" to any governmental body which, although not yet in compliance with LCDC's goals, has a comprehensive plan under consideration and is making "satisfactory progress" toward completion. Unless these minimal conditions are met, LCDC is required by law to step in and adopt a plan and zoning for a non-complying city or county.

The first set of twelve jurisdictions sought extensions averaging four years. Lane County headed the list with a ten-year extension request (although it expected to comply with most goals by 1980). Other local governments which sought extensions ranging from ten months to six years were Hood River, Sherman, Wasco and Yamhill counties and the cities of Corvallis, The Dalles, Dufur, Estacada, Hood River, Millersburg, and Port Orford.

The LCDC staff had recommended Commission approval of all twelve extension and grant requests with only minor conditions.

There were, therefore, many surprised faces when LCDC Chairman L.B. Day asked the planning director of Hood River County, the first jurisdiction to present its case, how Hood River would feel "if we amend this compliance schedule a little right now, take off about three years, and direct you to establish EFU [Exclusive Farm Use] zoning and an urban growth boundary as your number one priority?"

### Day Emphasizes Farm Preservation

Day and the rest of the Commission minced no words in asserting the protection of agricultural lands as the first order of business. Commission member James Smart asked one county's representative how much farmland had been lost since the passage of Senate Bill 10 (in 1969, requiring counties to adopt plans and implementing ordinances) due to the county's failure to adopt adequate zoning. Day, referring to Hood River County's compliance schedule, exclaimed that "EFU zoning around Parkdale and Odell by 1978 or '79 just doesn't cut the mustard."

During the meeting Day reiterated the Commission's policy that there is no priority ranking among the state-wide goals. It is clear, however, that LCDC has established a schedule for cities and counties, which obviously cannot accomplish everything at once. In each of the extensions granted January 5, LCDC established three requirements:

- (1) Extensions are for one year only. Cities or counties requiring more time must submit revised extension requests at the end of 1976.
- (2) All urban areas must designate urban growth boundaries as soon as possible, and perhaps as a preliminary condition of receiving a planning extension.
- (3) All agricultural lands must be protected with Exclusive Farm Use zoning as soon as possible this year.

These requirements do not excuse governments from accomplishing other goal tasks for which they have time and resources. But they simplify the job of the many cities and counties which will be seeking extensions from LCDC beginning March 1. The requirements also address a critical relationship between two goals—Urbanization and Agricultural Lands. Read together, the goals require counties and cities to zone EFU all "agricultural land" (i.e., Class I-IV soils, as defined by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service) outside urban growth boundaries. Thus, the designation of an urban boundary is the necessary first step in protecting farmland. The extension criteria which LCDC has developed insure that these two steps—urban boundary designation and EFU zoning—will occur as soon as practical in 1976.