



May 22, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Columbia River Gorge Commission
c/o connie.acker@gorgecommission.org

Re: Gorge 2020 Urban Area Boundary Revision Policy Process

Dear Chair Liberty and Commissioners:

The Wasco County Economic Development Commission provided comments for the May 12, 2020 work session in conjunction with other stakeholders. In anticipation of the upcoming CRGC work session on May 26, 2020, we wish to provide the Commission with additional comments around your process.

We believe the Commission should stop work on the proposed amendments to the urban area boundary revisions language in the Columbia Gorge Management Plan (“Plan”) and defer that boundary revision language until after the Commission finalizes and implements the updated Plan. The redline language as presented to the Commission at the May 12 work session may touch on policy topics that the Commission has discussed over the course of Gorge 2020 review, but the proposed language would punt key policy decisions to rulemaking and *ad hoc*, case-by-case considerations.

This approach has raised significant concerns among a range of stakeholders. It has been expressed many times through the Gorge 2020 process, that there is a shared objective of any amendment to the urban area boundary section of the Plan was to provide greater clarity for future applications. We feel that the May 12 redline would worsen the situation. We respectfully request that the Commission table this provision for now as it continues the remainder of the Gorge 2020 work.

Taking more time for policy making on urban area boundaries is the responsible path, as the Commission’s work will have permanent ramifications on the future of the Gorge’s communities and natural environments. In the end, not all stakeholders may agree on the adopted language -- but at a minimum, any amendment should give stakeholders and the public clear policy direction and definitive guidance for future growth of Gorge communities as well as a robust opportunity for stakeholders to provide input into the process.

Thank you,

Signed by Carrie Pipinich, EDC Staff on
behalf of Chair Silver

Joan Silver
Chair, Wasco County Economic Development Commission