

AGO Report

Volume 3
Number 1
Spring 2001



AGO's Legislation Introduced!

Candice Guth

AGO's work to reverse pro-growth policies and subsidies moved forward in February—at both the state and local levels.

State Legislature

Thank you to Rep. Charlie Ringo (D-District 6) [HB 3179 and HB 3466] and Rep. Chris Beck (D-District 12) [HB 3713] for introducing AGO's legislation.

Growth Impacts Disclosure Act, HB 3466. The bill prohibits local jurisdictions from major growth actions until a development impact statement is prepared. The development impact statement would detail the impact and costs of growth on traffic and commute times, air quality, land for parks and open spaces, adequacy of fire, ambulance, police, streets, water, sewer, and schools, fish and wildlife, water quantity and quality and quietness.

Full Cost of Growth Act, HB 3179. The bill would add to the list of system development charges (SDC's) that a jurisdiction may collect fees for new development to include—fire protection and rescue services, police, schools, libraries and community colleges.

Local Development Control Act, HB 3713. The bill allows a city or county to adopt indefinite moratoria on new development or to specify a maximum rate of

acceptable growth to protect the public health, welfare and livability.

Growth Not a Partisan Issue

The negative impact of growth is not a partisan issue. We talked to several representatives of both parties about our bills and all expressed interest in them. We asked Rep. Bill Witt of Washington County (R-District 7) to usher the bills through Legislative Counsel because he is the chairman of the Smart Growth and Commerce Committee. While Rep. Witt declined to sponsor our bills, he has indicated his willingness to give us a hearing on our bills in his committee. Thank you Rep. Witt.

With your help, we have a real opportunity to influence this year's Oregon legislature. Please participate in making this happen (see ACTION ALERT on back cover). Not sure who your reps are to contact? Go to <http://www.leg.state.or.us> and click on "Find Your Legislator." Or, call us at (503) 222-0282 and we'll find out for you!

County and City Model Ordinances

The text of AGO's two model ordinances for local government are available! If adopted by a city or county, these ordinances will require:

Alternatives to Growth Oregon

AGO strives to leave succeeding generations of Oregonians a more economically prosperous, environmentally healthy, and socially just State by encouraging progress toward a sustainable society, and discouraging growth focused on increased population and consumption.

In this issue . . .

Blumenauer on Population . . . 2

Grassroots Movement . . . 2 & 3

Emissions and the Clean Air Act . . . 4 & 5

Member's Op-Ed . . . 6

Members' Meetings . . . 7

- A growth impacts disclosure statement similar to the one in our Growth Impacts Disclosure Act.
- That the adopting community charge the full amount of all SDC's allowed by state law.

continued on page 3

Write, Call, E-Mail Your Representatives!

In January, the Portland City Club sponsored "A Conversation with Congressman Earl Blumenauer." At the forum, AGO Executive Director Candice Guth asked Rep. Blumenauer several questions about growth. She referred to the projection of Portland's regional government (Metro) that the region will grow by 800,000 people in just the next twenty-five years, and that many Oregonians were concerned that we were destroying our quality of life with our increasing numbers. Rep. Blumenauer responded that the region could grow by one million or even two million in a quarter century and still maintain our quality of life—if it was planned correctly. He pointed to England, which he noted is slightly smaller than Oregon and that England (he actually meant to say Great Britain) had 60 million people and they still have open spaces. (Of course, it has been a long time since that part of the world had any native salmon or wilderness.) Rep. Blumenauer acknowledged that population was an international issue, but he did not consider it an issue in the U.S.

If you don't agree with Rep. Blumenauer write him a note and tell him he needs to be willing to talk about population as well as consumption in Oregon and the U.S.!

In Portland:
516 SE Morrison, Suite 250
Portland, OR 97214
(503) 231-2300

In Washington, DC:
U.S. House of Representatives
1406 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4811

Grassroots Movement Sprouts

Candice Guth

Elected Officials

The news articles are still coming in.

- "New Hillsboro Leaders Question Growth" *Oregonian* 11/10/00.
- "Council in place, revolution is complete" *West Linn Tidings* 11/16/00 (four city council members who questioned the rate of growth in West Linn were elected).
- "A Coup in Bend" "...When the new city council is sworn in tomorrow it will officially switch from one that has encouraged growth to one that would like to discourage it—or at least limit it." *OPB Radio* 1/2/01.
- "Salem's Mayor Readies for 3rd Term..." "This city's maverick mayor, who championed slow growth and shook up the town's business community..." *Oregonian* 12/31/00.
- "Canby's mayor looks to cut growth" *Oregonian* 01/29/01.

And then there was the article in the *Oregonian* on January 18, 2001 titled "Builders battling anti-growth attitude" continued as "Voters pick anti-growth advocates in cities." This article says, "The 1990s were unprecedented for metro-area home builders in terms of units built, profits realized and power wielded. Profit margins on the 6,000 houses each year were so high that national companies flocked to Portland and its suburbs to reap the benefits. Success for the industry, however did not necessarily translate into widespread satisfaction for those already living here." The article goes on to say that

with elections in Metro and locally of people who are estranged from the homebuilders association, that they are now turning to the state legislature. "The association's decision to largely forgo Metro in favor of a legislative agenda, however, makes sense. The home builders' biggest wins during the past dozen year have come from Salem." (See our back page ACTION ALERT about what you can do.)

These are exciting times. Every few days, we are finding out about additional elected officials who are asking the right questions about growth—who is paying for it and what impact it is having on our quality of life and environment. These include officials in Oregon City, Sandy, Eugene, Albany, Milwaukie, Turner and Tigard. (Thanks to our members who are keeping us informed!)

Progressive Leadership Forum

AGO is hosting an invitation-only Progressive Leadership Forum organized by Eben Fodor this spring. It will give these elected leaders an opportunity to get together and share information, experiences and ideas. We have a window of opportunity to support these elected officials and show them they are not alone. We hope that together, they can bear the heat of criticism as well as recall efforts by powerful pro-growth advocates. In Bend, even before the city council was seated, there was talk of recall.

Alternatives to Growth Oregon

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Schools SDC Coalition

AGO is a member of a coalition of folks who are working to pass legislation (HB 2288) this session that will include schools in allowable systems development charges (SDC's). The coalition is largely made up of representatives of school districts and citizens who have fought hard for school bond measures as well as several elected representatives and other organizations. AGO believes these efforts would better serve the public and attract more powerful allies if they included the other services outlined in our Full Cost of Growth Act, HB 3179. However, because the cost of schools is the largest of the currently unallowable charges, and we want to be a part of efforts to bring the cost of growth before the public, we are very pleased to be a part of this coalition. If we fail at the legislature, the coalition hopes to pursue an initiative! AGO will continue to urge inclusion of those other capital costs of police, fire and other emergency services in allowable SDC's.

Metro

AGO is also considering an initiative at METRO (Portland area

regional government) for May of 2002 that will counter an anti-density measure that has been placed on that ballot by Oregonians in Action. We are meeting with activists who work with Metro about our initiative, and are examining its costs and benefits. Metro has invited AGO to a series of forums for planners, policy makers and the general public that will examine how growth has

been managed, and where to go from here. We are attending these meetings and talking about the impacts of growth, and encourage those of you in the Metro area to do so as well. If we have your email address, we will send you meeting notices. (If you would like to receive notices, but have not, send your email address to action@AGOregon.org.) Our goal is to have Metro start publicly disclosing the negative impacts of growth on the quality of life in the Metro region. Recently, Metro's Growth Management Committee has been changed to the Community Planning Committee. Could it be that the term "growth" is getting a

These are exciting times. Every few days, we are finding out about additional elected officials who are asking the right questions about growth—who is paying for it and what impact it is having on our quality of life and environment.

Legislation *(con't from page 1)*

We have commitments from five AGO members who are willing to bring these to their city councils; we'll keep you posted on their success. Please consider bringing them to your city council too! To get copies, call Sarah at 503-222-0282 or go to our website, www.AGOregon.org.

AGO Out and About

Upcoming Speaking Engagements

March 3: Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, Eugene.

March 6: Retired Teachers Organization, Aloha for member Bob Perry.

March 13: Eugene Rotary Club.

June 5: Hillsboro Kiwanis.

Talk About Growth!

In addition to our speaking engagements, AGO staff and board have been working to further broaden the growth debate:

- Joined the City Club of Portland and asked three speakers at the weekly speaker's forum about growth in Oregon.
- Met with Hasso Herring, columnist and editor, *Albany Democrat Herald*.
- Submitted and had published an "In My View" editorial in the *Bend Bulletin*.
- Participated in Metro 2040 Review Meetings and reminded them that their public involvement repeatedly indicated that a significant number of participants do not believe that growth is inevitable.

In addition, we have been in touch with folks in Colorado and New Hampshire who are interested in forming an Alternatives to Growth in their states.

ACTION ALERT

Search out speaking opportunities in your community - with neighborhood associations, environmental groups, civic organizations - and let us know who is interested in having us speak at their meeting. We are particularly interested in reaching out to youth.

THINK ABOUT IT!

With a Growing Population, Reducing Your Emissions

Andy Kerr

A guest on Jefferson Public Radio is waxing eloquently about the need for alternative transportation in the Rogue Valley; reinforcing my beliefs that society must switch to cleaner burning fuels and more efficient, economical and convenient forms of public transportation. I am enjoying the enthusiastic rap until I discover who is saying it.

The speaker is a Jackson County Commissioner who opposed the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, supports a return to the bad old days of ancient forest logging and favors finishing the Elk Creek Dam (which, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service, could finish off Rogue River coho salmon).

As one who helped establish the monument, derail the dam and keep both forests standing and fish swimming, I couldn't reconcile how this official could be so right on air quality and transportation, and be so wrong on forests and salmon.

By the time he was talking about the benefits of passenger rail between Grants Pass and Ashland, I had reconciled his obvious gross disregard of land quality and water quality and apparent high regard for air quality. Maybe he knows someone who is sick due to air pollution. However, given he is also a proponent of population growth in the Rogue Valley, it's more likely that he understands how the federal Clean Air Act works.

How the Federal Clean Air Act Works

The Clean Air Act is unique among other laws as it recognizes local air as a finite resource. National air quality standards are set for a variety of pollutants: particulates, nitrogen oxides, sulfur organic oxides, carbon monoxide, ozone and lead.

Air quality, as measured in each airshed, must meet these standards. (The issue of whether the standards are high enough to actually protect public health and scenic views is not the subject here [they are not].) If an airshed consistently violates clean air standards then government regulators can impose increasingly stringent rules. If that's not enough, then sanctions—such as cutting off federal highway money—can be imposed.

Since growth greatly depends on highways, growth would essentially stop if such sanctions were imposed. Under current law, the only way to stop growth is to grossly pollute the air. (Not that I'm recommending the strategy.)

Many airsheds are often hovering near the national limits. As pollution levels rise (along with population), local government imposes additional regulations to reduce per capita pollution. To "make room" for new capitas, each of us will need to limit use of wood stoves, fireplaces, lawnmowers, lighter fluid, barbecues, paint, cars, etc.

ons Doesn't Result in Cleaner Air

These requirements to reduce our per capita pollution make—and do not make—sense. Running a gasoline lawnmower for 60 minutes is like driving a car for a hundred miles. We must reduce our per capita pollution. Nevertheless, under the current scheme (which assumes population growth is a given), doing so doesn't mean the air will get any cleaner; it just won't get any dirtier.

The option of not growing to maintain air quality (not to mention all those other qualities) has not been considered. If Oregon weren't growing in population, then no additional controls would be necessary to maintain air quality. Any new

controls would improve air quality.

My wife and I bought a Toyota Prius, a gasoline-electric hybrid sedan (52 mph city, 41 mph highway). EPA classifies it as a "Super Ultra Low Emission Vehicle" (SULEV). It emits 10% of the pollution of an average car. While we've significantly lowered our per capita pollution (and equally raised our green bragging rights), the air in the Rogue Valley won't be the cleaner for it. In fact, all that we've really done is to make room in the Rogue Valley airshed for nine-tenths of another car, or nine more if they are all Priuses.

AGO Welcomes New Board Member



Brian Beinlich has been interested in growth issues since 1972, when he first read "The Limits to Growth." Brian is active in his local CPO in Washington County. He is a co-founder of Friends of North Plains, and is currently Treasurer of Oregon Communities for a Voice in Annexations (OCVA). Brian is a Senior Software Engineer at STEP Technology in Portland.

Many Thanks to Departing Board Members

Due to their demanding schedules, we have lost two valued Board members, Linda Craig and Jayme Vasconcellos. Linda and Jayme, thank you for your hard work!

What is AGO, what do we do, and how are we different?

The goal of Alternatives to Growth Oregon is to achieve a sustainable Oregon. Many organizations are working toward sustainability, so what is different about AGO? Most organizations advocating sustainability ignore the most fundamental reality: achieving a sustainable state is not possible without stabilizing population and consumption.

Alternatives to Growth Oregon advocates ending the growth of population and consumption. That sets AGO apart from other organizations. AGO respects the work of other sustainability organizations, but believes it is also essential to strike at the root cause of the daunt-

ing threats to Oregon's environment and livability. AGO is creating a citizens movement to make population and consumption growth an issue in elections and public policy debates, so as to reverse present pro-growth policies.

AGO reaches out to all citizens, the media, and environmental activists. We encourage all to learn and acknowledge growth's negative impact on the quality of our lives and the health of our natural environment. AGO works to enact legislation that will disclose the impacts of growth, end subsidies to growth, and give local communities the ability to stop growing. We research the costs of growth and the tax and

social policies that encourage growth. We distribute our findings to help change those policies.

AGO encourages individuals to make personal decisions that consider the costs to society of a growing population and unsustainable lifestyles. We point to the fact that it is policy and law, as well as individual actions, that cause growth of our population and consumption. Growth is not inevitable. Oregon can set an example for the rest of the nation by learning to live within natural limits. We can become the first sustainable state, but only if we achieve a stable level of population and consumption.

Save Energy and Get a Tax Credit!

Sarah Bidwell

Energy is a hot topic these days with more reason than ever to limit your energy use. You can get a credit on your Oregon income taxes for making your home more energy-efficient and helping preserve Oregon's environment. Tax credits from \$50 to \$1500 are available for:

- Appliances
- Premium Efficiency Ducts
- Geothermal Space Heating
- Solar Water Heating
- Solar Space Heating
- Solar Electricity
- Alternative-Fuel Vehicles

For more information, see the Oregon Office of Energy's website, <http://www.energy.state.or.us/res/tax/taxcdt.htm>. Or, call Colleen Summers at 1-800-221-8035 toll-free in Oregon.

Other Tips

Contact your local utility for cash rebates and low-interest loans for improving energy efficiency in the home.

Conduct an energy audit of your home to learn where and how you can save energy. (Most utilities provide this service for free.)

Did you know . . .

California grew by 4 million in the last four years? How fast can energy plants be built?

AGO Member's Op-Ed

Dennis Phillips

Energy Shortages in California Symptom of Larger Population Problem

There's been lots of attention in the media recently to the disparity between, on the one hand, the amount of electricity available now in California, and, on the other hand, the

demand for electricity. This is routinely being reported as an "electricity shortage" or an "energy short-

age". However, Californians are using less energy (per capita energy consumption has decreased 5% in the last 20 years), so why do we have this problem? The answer is a simple one, but unfortunately not one which many people seem to want to hear about. And it's the same answer to most of our other "shortages" as well. The fact is that most places have MORE electricity, MORE water, MORE housing, etc. now than ever before. What all of these "shortages" have in common is that they're semantic and intellectual ways for the public to remain in denial about the **Population Longage** which is what they all really are. During the past 20 years in California, population grew from 23 million to 33 million! That's a 43% increase. It's also most of the truth about "the shortage."

An individual always in debt who continually spends more than s/he makes would probably be recognized as having a problem of spending too much. Organic tissue which keeps on growing without any consideration as to the limits of its food

supply is defined as a malignant tumor. Why is it that such behavior by the people of California and our species as a whole is still defined as normal and/or healthy?

It's way past time for us, as a species, to take a look at our long term reliable energy income, and decide to reduce our fertility rate, at least

until we're once again (as our ancestors did for thousands of years) "spending" less than we "earn." An increased death rate is the other alternative. (Cutting back on the \$2 per person per year that the U.S. spends on family planning funds, as Mr. Bush recently did, is not the first step.)

A realistic assessment of our Optimal Population (particularly from an Ecocentric perspective) should lead us to conclude that a much smaller population should be our long term goal... so as to leave not only 'us', but our fellow passengers on Spaceship Gaia... with an abundance of 'power', clean water, clean air, and other things which define the quality of life for all.

Submitted by:

Dennis Phillips, Oregon Optimal Population Society (OOPS!), Coos Bay, OR

Editor's Note

If you would like to submit an article for the Member's Op-Ed section of the *AGO Report*, email (info@AGOOregon.org) or mail your article to AGO, 520 SW Sixth Ave., Ste. 930, Portland, OR 97204. **450 word limit please!**

Members Turn Out to Take Action

Candice Guth

Member meetings attract enthusiastic activists

AGO has now had two member meetings in Portland- both on legal holidays, but with a good turnout of members who want to be active participants!

AGO believes that a grassroots movement is the only way to change embedded pro-growth policies at every level of our government. That is why we want to meet with you, hear from you, let you know what we are doing and get your feedback.

The two meetings have centered around the legislation we have introduced at the state level and our model ordinances. We have mailed members a postcard to solicit e-mail addresses, so that we can coordinate action now that AGO's bills are introduced. We have identified a project champion, Richard Ellmyer, who will coordinate members' action on the bills. Thank you Richard! At the last meeting, we identified five members who are

willing to meet with their city councils to discuss model ordinance adoption in Beaverton, Tigard, Happy Valley, Milwaukee and Sandy. At the next meeting they will report back.

We also discussed outreach—how to bring our message to the greatest number of people who will then work to reform pro-growth policies. We talked about education, a speaker's bureau and how best to bring about change. We don't always agree about strategy, but the conversations are open and friendly. Hope to see you at the next one.

Meetings Coming Up

Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month in room 323 of the Smith Memorial Center at Portland State University, at 7:00 p.m.

- March 19
- April 16
- May 21

What You Can Do

AGO is building a grassroots citizens movement to change state and local public policies that promote growth as well as influence national pro-growth policies. In addition to other **ACTION ALERT** items in this newsletter, here are some other ways for you to participate:

- Take one or both of the model ordinances to your city council and encourage them to adopt it. Call (503) 222-0282 or email action@AGOregon.org to get a copy of the ordinances.
- Investigate opportunities for AGO to increase its funding base of foundation grants, large donors, and matching gifts programs. Call Candice at (503) 222-0282 if you are interested in helping out with this.
- If you are outside of the Portland region, we hope you will also feel free to e-mail or call us with your feedback until YOU set up AGO meetings in your region.

MEMBERSHIP / CONTRIBUTION FORM

N1A301CM

Yes, I want to Keep Oregon Oregon and

- Become a member of AGO Make an additional contribution
- \$35 Regular \$75 Supporter \$250 Sustainer \$1000 President's Circle Other
 \$50 Family \$100 Patron \$500 Benefactor \$5000 Life

Name(s) _____

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Print name as it appears on card _____

Expiration Date _____ / _____ Signature (if using credit card) _____

Email Addresses - We Need Yours!

Email is a very effective tool for us to let you know of critical meetings and actions you can take to end growth. We have used email to alert members of upcoming Metro meetings on growth, training opportunities, and AGO's member meetings. If you send us your email address, we promise to only send information that we believe will be of use to you.

How?

- * Send us an email at action@AGOregon.org with the words, "email list" in the subject line. Please include your name in the text of the message.
- * Call us at (503) 222-0282.



Alternatives to Growth
Oregon

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The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.

M I C H E L A N G E L O

ACTION ALERT!

Richard Ellmyer

AGO Legislative Project Champion

I urge you to participate in AGO's first major legislative effort. Why? Because if you want the powers that be to take us seriously, then we must demonstrate that AGO can make a difference. So, if you want to start changing the way politicians and our neighbors think about growth, then watch your email for updates on how you can help.

AGO has submitted three bills to the Oregon Legislature (see page 1 for details). Representative Bill Witt, the chairman of the House Smart Growth committee has unequivocally agreed to hold hearings on all three of AGO's bills. This is astounding. Bravo Bill. If Bill Witt keeps his promise, then AGO has already won a victory. Remember, anytime AGO gets any part of its agenda on the public table we have been successful.

AGO board members must appear to testify. AGO staff must coordinate all the activity and keep everyone on track. AGO members must participate in any way they can. If we all do our part by the close of the legislature AGO will be on the political map.

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