



# Letter to the Editor for Feb. 23, 2016

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## State rep. urges support for Alternative 4

I urge our Clark County Board of Councilors to support the preferred alternative that includes Alternative 4 adopted on Nov. 24, 2015, as they move forward with Clark County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan update because it is the right thing to do.

As representatives of the people we are reminded by our Supreme Court: "The essence of democracy is that the right to make law rests in the people and flows to the government, not the other way around. Freedom resides first in the people without need of a grant from government."

As a State Representative in the 18th Legislative District, I represent a larger number of rural landowners in Clark County than any other district.

For the past four years in office, I have heard repeatedly from constituents about the need for comprehensive land use reform in our rural areas.

Since 1994, our citizens have been shortchanged and disrespected by past elected Boards of County Commissioners. It is my sincere hope they will not be shortchanged or disrespected by this current Board of County Councilors.

Instead of deferring to staff who has no skin in this game, Councilors should respect the desires of a broad majority of those who actually own and pay taxes on that land. Councilors have an obligation to support the rich cultural heritage of our farming and forestry families that span many generations.

I urge this body to support a strong, thriving and sustainable rural economy in the same manner they support economic development within our cities.

Why would Clark County Councilors place a higher value on employment within our cities over jobs in our rural communities? There is no cogent reason to deny economic development opportunities for all citizens, regardless of which hamlet they reside.

Every day in Olympia, House Republicans fight for the rights of rural Washington because many of our rural districts have been left behind in the economic recovery from the Great Recession.

Alternative 4 will allow for more affordable housing by increasing the supply of a variety of parcel sizes to meet the real estate demands that our citizens desire. Alternative 4 will increase tax revenue to the county while utilizing existing infrastructure.

It is clear Alternative 4 is fully compliant with the Growth Management Act's provisions for five acre minimum lot sizes, since this plan is consistent with the majority of the counties in Washington State by using predominant parcel sizes.

The threat of litigation by land use attorneys and government bureaucrats is simply a red herring, designed to intimidate members of the Council.

Furthermore, Alternative 4 uses accurate population growth assumptions and enables the county to comply with Washington State's Office of Financial Management projection numbers.

Lastly, Alternative 4 represents a major compromise from a plan originally presented by Clark County's rural land owners two years ago.

Most importantly, it is clear Alternative 4 represents what the majority of rural and resource landowners desire in responsible land use policy. Can you imagine the outrage by city officials if rural landowners tried to control land use planning in our cities? Yet, that is exactly what those promoting centralized planning are trying to do to our citizens in rural Clark County. It is our job as elected officials to respect the will of the voters we serve. We must never forget we answer to them.

The Clark County Councilors have two choices. They can further advance the negative stereotype of politicians who make promises to get elected and then ignore the will of the citizens they serve. Or, they can take a refreshing approach to governance of the people, by the people and for the people.

I urge our County Council to respect the values and property rights of an overwhelming majority of our mutual constituents and reaffirm Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative in efforts to update Clark County's Land Use Plan.

State Rep. Liz Pike, 18th District, Camas