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Ferrioli addresses housing and jobs for rural Oregon

SALEM, Ore.-Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli, of John Day, has a plan to help tackle the housing and jobs crisis in rural Oregon, which was hard-hit by the 2017 snow disasters that destroyed homes and businesses.

Senate Bill 432 will allow rural counties with shrinking populations to avoid cumbersome land use rules to fast-track development. Local control over land use can increase development, says Ferrioli. He says Washington serves as a good example of a state that has developed land use laws that meet the unique needs of diverse regions of their state.

What's more, Ferrioli says, is that 10 out of 39 counties in Washington have taken advantage of the Washington Growth Management Act, which allows land use flexibility. Idaho, he adds, has a lower minimum wage and has more flexible land use laws.

"Rural Oregon counties are hamstrung by our state's outdated land use laws. It's hard for our shrinking rural Oregon counties to compete with these better-for-business states," said Ferrioli. "We need to foster policies that allow us to create sustainable economies. SB 432 would allow Oregon to be competitive with our neighboring states, bring business to Oregon, create jobs and a stable tax base to allow rural Oregon to survive."

Ferrioli's bill is modeled after the Washington Growth Management Act, which was enacted in 1990 and allows small counties to opt out of the state's growth management planning requirements.

Under Ferrioli's proposal, the following counties would be eligible to take advantage of land use flexibility:

Baker
Gilliam

Grant
Harney
Malheur
Sherman
Wallowa
Wheeler

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