

## Group wants to halt Measure 37

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### Document Text

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A supporter of the initiative said there are few solid examples to support the claims about its problems

A longtime land use watchdog group urged the state Legislature on Monday to suspend Measure 37 until lawmakers have a chance to iron out problems with the initiative, approved by voters statewide two years ago.

Bob Stacey, executive director of 1000 Friends of Oregon, said at a midmorning news conference in Portland that Measure 37 - which requires governments to compensate landowners if public regulations diminish the value of their property - is "being used to impose vast new wrongs" instead of correcting old ones.

Claims filed under Measure 37's provisions have resulted in demands "to build gravel pits, pumice mines, expansion of garbage dumps and poorly planned subdivisions," Stacey said.

But Dave Hunnicutt, the head of Oregonians in Action, which sponsored the measure, said during a telephone interview late Monday that 1000 Friends and other opponents of the measure wildly overstate its effects.

"Show me the development - give me some real examples," Hunnicutt said. "It hasn't happened yet, and I don't think it will. And I don't think the Legislature is going to suspend Measure 37 absent some type of more concrete proposal than what 1000 Friends made today."

Marketed originally as a way to allow aging parents to build homes on their farms to accommodate adult children or carve off homesites to support themselves financially in their retirement, Measure 37 instead has opened vast tracts of state farm and forest land to "the imminent threat of irresponsible - and irreversible - development," Stacey said.

He cited a claim filed recently by an out-of-state timber company that, if granted, could open 32,000 acres of forest land - an area "three times the size of Beaverton," he said - to development.

Hunnicutt says touting worst-case scenarios like that one inflame the Measure 37 issue but probably never will happen.

Even with Measure 37 waivers from development regulations, health and safety standards such as water and sewer capacity and traffic safety still have to be met before development can go forward, Hunnicutt said.

'It is frustrating to me that many property owners have been advised to ask for (levels of development) that are not realistic,' he said. 'We tell people, 'Go out and talk to your neighbors, figure out what realistically can be done - don't aggravate them. It doesn't do anybody any good.''

Acknowledging that voters approved Measure 37 overwhelmingly two years ago, Stacey said that recent surveys show that while people still want protection of property values, they favor some limits on the amount of development that could result.

The survey commissioned by 1000 Friends in October showed that 60 percent of those polled still support property value protections, but that 83 percent also support limiting the amount of development that can take place as a result. Nearly as many - 71 percent - believe that property owners should be able to recoup their lost property values but not make a killing through unlimited development.

"It seems appropriate to have conversations about those issues," Hunnicutt said. "Anything that can be done to make this work easier, to set reasonable limits, we're happy to have that discussion. But we want to work with facts, with what's actually happening."

As a starting point, 1000 Friends also proposed Monday that the Legislature schedule a series of town hall meetings throughout the state to get a clearer view of public opinion about the effects of Measure 37 on local communities.

Despite continuing support for the basic premise of Measure 37, surveys also show that "by more than a 60 percent majority, (Oregonians) think that we should use land use planning to protect Oregon's future," Stacey said.

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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