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Senate Committee On Housing and Development

OFB Testimony on SB 8

March 16, 2021

Chair Jama, members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 8. By way of background, the Oregon Farm Bureau is the state's largest agricultural trade association representing nearly 7,000 farm and ranch families across the state. While OFB appreciates the legislature's efforts in addressing affordable housing, OFB has concerns about the potential conversion of important agricultural lands that might result from SB 8 as currently drafted.

Specifically, while it appears that Section 2 (2) of the bill is intended to focus on commercial lands within the Urban Growth Boundary, Section 2 (3)(a) appears to allow super siting of residential units on lands zoned Exclusive Farm Use outside of boundary. OFB supports the use of UGBs as a means of dividing agriculture land from urban land, designating land within UGBs to provide space for all urban needs, such as affordable housing, as well as managing the growth of a city in such a way that needs and services can be efficiently provided. As written, SB 8 may allow for affordable housing developers to jump the boundary and develop housing units on agricultural lands, which would run counter to Goal 3 and may impair the infrastructure needed to produce food and fiber for current and future generations.

OFB suggests that SB 8 be amended to provide clarity as to whether is intended to focus on commercial lands within the Urban Growth Boundary, or whether the goal is to allow development of units in all areas notwithstanding Oregon's land use laws. If it is the latter, OFB is strongly opposed to the super siting of any non-farm use within the exclusive farm zone.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment today and we are happy to answer any questions.

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