



Testimony in Support of HB 2393A
Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development
May 7, 2013

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Chair Roblan, members of the committee, thank you for your consideration of HB 2393A, a bill that would provide greater economic certainty for small-scale poultry producers across Oregon by clarifying how these operations fit within the land use system.

To provide some background, the Oregon Legislature in 2011 passed HB 2872 (now ORS 603.038) to exempt from state licensing small-scale poultry producers who slaughter and sell up to 1000 birds per year on their own property direct to consumers. This aligned state law with federal rules for small poultry producers. The goal was to reduce the cost of poultry slaughter for small-scale growers and create new economic opportunities in rural communities across the state. It is particularly important in parts of the state that are far from larger, state-licensed poultry processors, and allows small-scale producers to get started without incurring the significant, and potentially insurmountable, costs of building their own state-licensed facility.

Though it was intended to ease restrictions and reduce costs for small-scale poultry producers, the 2011 bill was silent about land use permitting. HB 2393A would address this while ensuring that these small-scale producers find consistent regulations across the state, and avoid potentially high costs and long waits for conditional use permits.

A conditional use permit, while potentially appropriate for larger-scale poultry processing operations that have more significant impacts and waste management issues, is not appropriate for the scale of processing envisioned in ORS 603.038. This type of processing matches the scale of other permitted farm uses, typically involving temporary processing stations and minimal waste. Further, the cost and time involved in obtaining a conditional use permit for a small scale poultry operation would likely make such an enterprise uneconomical, negating the original legislative intent.

We have consulted with the Department of Land Conservation and Development on how to address this issue, and believe that the small-scale poultry slaughter, processing and on-farm sales envisioned in ORS 603.038 are consistent with other permitted farm uses in their minimal impact on neighboring communities, waste output, and the size of infrastructure. HB 2393A was developed with DLCD's input and crafted to ensure small-scale poultry slaughter, processing and on-farm sales of up to 1000 birds will not require county conditional use permits in the future.

HB 2393A is needed to create certainty across the state for small-scale poultry producers operating under the 1000 bird exemption, and we believe it will help ensure the Legislature's intent to provide important economic opportunities in rural Oregon while helping meet growing demand for locally produced food.

HB 2393A is also one of the top priorities of the Oregon Grows Partnership, an alliance of farm, rural development, local food and food security organizations whose collective membership represents over a quarter of a million Oregonians who are farmers, small business owners, rural residents and consumers.

Additionally, HB 2393A has received support from faculty within Oregon State University's Small Farms program, who provide technical assistance to small-scale producers. Included as testimony today is a letter of support from Lauren Gwin, PhD. with OSU's Small Farm Program and the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network, which provides additional explanations for the importance of this legislation.

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