

I am writing in support of HB2202.

There is never a law that someone can't pick at to make it work better for them. Oregon's four decade struggle to maintain the spirit and intent of our (and I stress *our*) land use system is a never-ending struggle. To quote the Department of Land Conservation and Development:

"The statute on Exclusive Farm Use zones permits a wide range of uses. The list has expanded over the years to be responsive to changing needs. While some uses, such as farm stands and some wineries, may be allowed outright by counties, other uses require a county finding that the proposed use will not have significant adverse impacts on nearby farmland.

"The most common non-farm uses approved by counties include "commercial activities in conjunction with farm use" (for example, seed cleaning, fertilizer sales, and berry processing), "home occupations" (home-based businesses with no more than five employees) and "utility facilities necessary for public service" (such as wastewater treatment, cell towers and electrical substations).

"Examples of other potential uses of farmland include: mining of mineral and aggregate resources, solid waste disposal sites, rural transportation facilities and private and public parks, although some of these and other uses are restricted in "high value" farm areas. . . ."

Agriculture is a multi-billion dollar industry based upon the industry of thousands of small farmers. Sadly, these farmers, who till the surface of the land, risk seeing their livelihoods destroyed by what lies beneath the soil. Gravel companies say environmental hurdles prevent dredging rivers for gravel, and alternative quarries either don't produce the quality needed for construction or are so far from urban centers that the cost of transporting heavy rock makes it unfeasible. This is simply not correct, and sacrificing sustainable farmland is not the answer.

Two hundred to 400 acres of farmland are lost each year to aggregate mining. This is the greatest threat to farming. Land that is sustainably farmed is lost forever with aggregate mining. Restoration to any *status quo ante* is impossible. When you dig, you degrade. We need to stop nickel and dining our farmers with more and more "exemptions" which erode the intent of our land use system.

HB 2202 protects the Willamette Valley's prime farmland. I urge you to support this Bill.

Sincerely,

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