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Please Oppose HB 3098-B

HB 3098-B allows yet another non-farm use on exclusive farm use lands. Adding a new non-farm use on farm lands does not serve the agricultural community and will result in taking more farm lands out of farm use and the loss of farm jobs. There are already over two dozen non-farm uses that are allowed as outright permitted uses on farm lands as well as over two dozen non-farm uses that are allowed on farm lands as conditional uses. Cumulatively, these non-farm uses take large swaths of agricultural land out of production and hurt the agricultural economy.

This is important because Agriculture is Oregon's second largest industry: *1 out of 8 jobs in this state is agriculture-related*, and the industry is directly and indirectly linked to about \$22 billion in sales of goods and services, accounting for 15% of the statewide total of sales involving all industry sectors. *Agriculture is traded-sector* – 80% is sold out of state with 40% exported out of the country, bringing new dollars into Oregon. And those figures have been increasing almost steadily for two decades, which is not a story any other industry can tell. Agricultural land should stay in agricultural use to support our second largest industry and the jobs it creates.

HB 3098-B is limited to Eastern Oregon. So why protect agriculture in what some may say is the barren land of Eastern Oregon? It turns out that Eastern Oregon is not a barren wasteland. Much of it is very productive agricultural land. **Three of Oregon's top five producing agricultural counties are in Eastern Oregon.** The top five are Marion County at \$616.9 million, **Umatilla County at \$503.2 million, Morrow County at \$477.1 million**, Clackamas County at \$332.9 million, and **Malheur County at \$296.1 million.**

How is this possible? **Six of the eight highest grossing agricultural commodities in the state have a strong nexus to Eastern Oregon.** The top eight are **Cattle and Calves at \$779.8 million**, Nursery/Greenhouse at \$641.1 million, **Dairy at \$523.9 million, Wheat at \$521.5 million, Hay at \$413.6 million**, Grass seed at \$294.9 million, **Potatoes at \$165.2 million, and Onions at \$132.6 million.**

While we appreciate the changes that took place in committee and we think they make this a better bill, we oppose allowing yet another non-farm use on exclusive farm use lands. Agriculture is the economic engine of Eastern Oregon. To protect the agricultural economy in Eastern Oregon 1000 Friends of Oregon asks you to please oppose HB 3098-B.

Please vote NO on HB 3098-B.

From the Desk of
Rep. Ben Unger