



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PUBLIC SERVICES BUILDING

2051 KAEN ROAD | OREGON CITY, OR 97045

February 12, 2014

Senator Arnie Roblan, Chair
Senate Committee on Rural Communities & Economic Development
900 Court Street NE, Room 347
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 1575 (Allows establishment in forest zone or mixed farm and forest zone a processing facility for utilizing raw logs)

Dear Chair Roblan & Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, I would like to convey our unanimous support for SB 1575, which would clarify the definition of “forest products” and the types of activities that can occur in a “processing facility” on forest or mixed farm/forest land. Clackamas County also supports the -1 amendment, which removes language authorizing a processing facility as an outright permitted use and instead maintains existing county land use review procedures for evaluating these proposals.

This bill is needed to further clarify the definition of “primary processing” and what types of activities are allowed on forest land. Outside of “stud mills” and “portable chippers,” no other uses are explicitly defined in statute, which has prevented Fritch Log Homes, located in Clackamas County, from securing a conditional use permit from the County. The denial of a conditional use permit from the County was unsuccessfully appealed both to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) and the Court of Appeals. A legislative change is the only way to provide this business owner with the land use approval designation he needs to operate.

The bill is essential to the health of rural economies and the wood manufacturing industry. Since adoption of the Northwest Forest Plan, Clackamas County has seen devastating economic losses in our rural communities and wood products industry – going from 12 operating mills in the County to just two. This bill will allow a vital Clackamas County business to add value to their wood products by assembling, then disassembling, log homes for the market.

Like many of you, the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners seeks to ease burdensome regulations that harm small businesses. This bill will allow one of Clackamas County's important businesses to contribute to the economic growth and vitality of our region and state. At the same time, the -1 amendment will maintain existing county land use review procedures for evaluating these proposals (planning director review or conditional use permit). This will allow counties to review the compatibility of these proposed uses with the surrounding area, including their impact to neighbors, safety and traffic.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. We urge your support and invite you to contact either Jared Anderson (janderson@clackamas.us) or Chris Lyons (clyons@clackamas.us) with questions.

Sincerely,

John Ludlow, Chair
On behalf of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners