



***Jefferson County Farm Bureau
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February 22, 2015

Written Testimony in Opposition to SB 25

Dear Chair Edwards and Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Committee Members,

Jefferson County Farm Bureau opposes SB 25, which would allow certain rural counties to disregard Oregon's land use planning goals when setting their own land use policies. This bill reminds us of the "Frontier Counties" bill from years ago. This bill only endangers the precious agricultural lands in the rural counties of the state for easy conversion to other development that is non-compatible with agriculture.

Jefferson County Farm Bureau opposes this legislation because it would undue over 40 years of comprehensive land use planning in several rural communities. Oregon's land use planning system provides invaluable protections for Oregon's productive agricultural lands. These rural lands should be getting even greater protection, not having their existing protections removed. In order to remain one of Oregon's largest industries, we need to ensure that we have an adequate supply of agricultural lands to allow existing operations to stay in business and move to the next generation. Allowing rural, predominantly eastern counties to set their own land use planning goals would thwart this objective, and could put even more pressure on already taxed farmers and ranchers.

If this bill passes, rural Oregon counties could develop their own land use policies. Local land use systems that are contrary to the state system would cause variable land prices in several of these counties, and make it difficult for farmers and ranchers to expand or alter their operations to keep up with changing demands. These changes would also likely allow (and even encourage) non-compatible uses to be placed next to each other, increasing the risk of conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural operations.

Jefferson County Farm Bureau urges you to ensure the continued protection of our valuable farm and ranch lands, and asks that you oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

Sue Vanek
President

Home of the North Unit Irrigation District