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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB565: 1000 FRIENDS OF OREGON

Chair Hass and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB565, the Revitalize Main Street Act. 1000 Friends of Oregon supports SB565.

Tax policy, our rural towns and cities, and land use policy are directly connected. The companion bill to SB100, SB101, directly tied land use priorities and tax policy in providing a different tax rate to working lands in agriculture and forestry.

The tax policy represented in SB565 helps rebuild and restore important historic structures across Oregon. Restoring these structures helps revitalize main streets in parts of the state that value and benefit from highlighting Oregon's heritage.

The bill contains a preference for projects in rural communities. These projects are critically important. The margin on a rural project is almost always much smaller than the return on an urban project, simply due to real estate values. A small beneficial tax incentive may tip the balance in motivating an investor to take on a project in a rural town.

1000 Friends of Oregon worked directly on a project that provides examples of structures and a rural community that could benefit from this program. In 2006, we completed a report entitled Garibaldi Connections as part of the Oregon Coastal Futures project. In conjunction with the Mayor of Garibaldi, the Port, and other local elected officials, we worked to identify economic development opportunities for Garibaldi. The final report highlights the importance of the historic Coast Guard Station to the community, and the opportunity to build on this and other historic resources to benefit Garibaldi. The report is attached to this testimony. This project, and similar projects, merits the investment of the state through SB565's program.

Thank you for supporting rural Oregon and supporting SB565.