



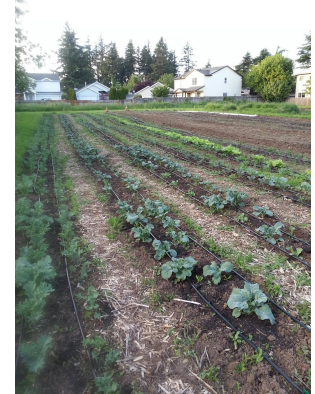
# HB 2723 - Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones

Good for farmers and the communities they serve

## Urban Agriculture is Growing!

Urban agriculture is gaining in importance as more and more entrepreneurs are raising vegetables, fruit, and livestock on undeveloped property within city limits. These urban plots provide greater food security to (often) low-income neighborhoods, income to urban farmers, green spaces that benefit communities, and opportunities for urban residents to learn how their food is produced.

But unimproved urban land carries a high tax burden and is exposed to development pressure. HB 2723 would assist urban farmers and the communities that depend on them by reducing their costs by allowing landholders to receive a farm tax deferral.



### Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones

Under HB 2723 counties and cities could elect to create Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones to provide tax benefits for urban agriculture. They would not be required to create these zones, it would be a local decision.

#### Tax Benefits

- ◆ Landowners in an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone would contract with the county or city to keep their unimproved land in agricultural use for a minimum of five years.
- ◆ In exchange, that land would be subject to a special assessment in the same way that farmland is assessed for ORS 308A.107. This means significantly reduced taxes during the duration of the farming activity.
- ◆ The bill has checks and balances to ensure that if land is not actually being used for urban agriculture, it will be disqualified from the special assessment.

#### Impact on Land Use Program

Land in an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone, including land qualifying for a special assessment, will not affect land inventories for the purpose of land use planning, or change urban growth boundaries.

### Support for HB 2723

“Urban farming provides green space, often in lower-income neighborhoods. Urban farming can be an oasis in a food desert, providing affordable, fresh produce in neighborhoods without access to healthy foods. Urban farming provides an opportunity for urban residents, especially children, to learn about agriculture and how food is produced. Urban farming is also an incredible training ground for beginning farmers who often do not have access to land.”

*Bryan Allan, Zenger Farm, Portland*

“If HB 2723 becomes law, my landlords would certainly take advantage of the reduction in taxes and pass those savings on to us with a reduced lease rate. Our farm would become more profitable and having the security a 5-year lease would help us hone our markets and plan for a land transition in the future if necessary.”

*Ryan Miller, Rockwood Urban Farm, Portland*

“Growers who plant intensively can produce thousands of dollars worth of fresh produce on a fraction of an acre. Small urban parcels like this can be the start of a viable farming business. HB 2723 could create a foothold for many Oregonians who have the farming gene but need access to land.”

*Rebecca Landis, Market Director, Corvallis-Albany Farmers Markets*