



**Oregon Farm Bureau Testimony on SB 1588
Senate Business and Transportation Committee
February 10, 2016**

Oregon Farm Bureau Opposes Softening Oregon's Land Use Laws

Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Oregon Farm Bureau urges you to oppose SB 1588. Oregon Farm Bureau is Oregon's largest grassroots agricultural organization, representing 8,000 member families who land across the state.

Oregon Farm Bureau opposes this legislation. Oregon's land use system currently provides important protection for agricultural lands, and individual counties should not be able to undo these protections. Oregon's exclusive farm use policy calls for the "preservation of a maximum amount of the limited supply of agricultural land" in order to maintain the agricultural economy of the state.

Conflicting land uses in areas devoted to agricultural use can have a significant impact on farmland in Oregon and a significant impact on rural counties. Oregon's land use system is vital in ensuring that conflicts in farm and ranch land be reduced, which enables the adjacent land to stay in production and be transferred between generations. Protection of Oregon's productive farmland is of paramount importance in Oregon's land use planning process, and local governments are charged with ensuring that this important objective is achieved through their decisions.

Allowing rural counties to set their own land use planning goals jeopardizes Oregon's unique system, and could make it more difficult for farmers and ranchers to stay in business due to variable land prices, conflicting uses, and encroachment from expanding towns and cities.

While Oregon Farm Bureau strongly supports efforts to revitalize our rural economies, we believe that protecting agricultural lands must be paramount among those efforts. We urge the committee to oppose this legislation as contrary to those interests.

If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Mary Anne Nash at maryanne@oregonfb.org or 541-740-4062.