

Dear Chair Beyer and members of the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation:

I am distressed that this bill is getting serious consideration in this short session.

While I fully support and sympathize with our rural counties that continue to struggle in the aftermath of the Great Recession, I really believe that this bill would make matters worse, rather than better.

Rural counties, much more so than their more urban counterparts, are economically dependent upon rural tourism opportunities: hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, river rafting, bicycling, etc. Gutting our land use laws to provide an imagined short term boost to these rural economies would, I fear, result in both a short term and a long term loss in tourist dollars, and thereby a very real economic loss to these struggling economies.

I live in Central Oregon. I hunt, fish, hike, river raft, and bird watch throughout Eastern Oregon. For me, like so many others, the pristine rural character of Eastern Oregon is the defining characteristic of my avocational experiences. If the beauty and essentially rural characteristics of this multivaried landscape is sold off, industrialized and commercialized, I can, and would, choose to recreate elsewhere. There are many like me. We can travel to Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, and Nevada in less than a day's drive. For us, it is a choice. For the residents of Eastern Oregon, it is not a choice. They live and work in an area that is dependent on our tourist dollars.

This bill, well intentioned as it may be, would be a significant step backward for Eastern Oregon, and for the Oregonians who treasure it.

Please consider this bill and its unintended consequences carefully. It is my hope that you will find wisdom, and vote against it.

Thank you,

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