

Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing:

I am a resident of Sisters Oregon and am unable to attend Monday's hearing on these two bills in person. Please accept this email as my testimony, and add it into the record.

First, House Bill 2937 may be well intentioned, but it is inequitable in effect. It would make the currently existing unfair historical discrepancies in the application of our land use laws worse, rather than better.

Let me explain. Many existing EFU parcels contain no dwellings, and no dwellings could be permitted on most of those parcels under current land use laws due to the minimum crop value requirements. Other similarly sized EFU parcels have at least one dwelling on them because those dwellings preexisted the enforcement of current land use laws.

(For example, my wife and I own an 80 acre EFU parcel just 1/2 mile outside the City of Salem's urban growth boundary. It is currently farmed for grass seed. We cannot build a home on that parcel because we cannot meet the minimum annual crop value requirements under our current land use laws. So we moved from Salem to Sisters instead.)

This bill would exacerbate this anomalous inequity by allowing a second dwelling on some EFU parcels while still outlawing any dwellings at all on other similarly situated and sized EFU parcels.

Secondly, this bill would encourage the exactly the kind of urban sprawl that gave rise to our restrictive land use laws in the first place. In doing so it would cause new residents to drive their vehicles much further from their new scattered dwellings to work, church and school than if they lived within an urban growth boundary, and at substantially greater costs for gas and maintenance. It would cause local governments to incur extra costs of their own to service these new scattered dwellings for police and fire and other emergency services. And it does nothing to encourage affordable housing for there is no limit on square footage, numbers of rooms, size of garages, etc. It just allows more building of houses of any size and expense on any and all EFU farm and ranch lands, provided only that there is a preexisting dwelling already located there.

House Bill 2938 would also encourage urban sprawl, but it suffers from additional problems as well.

House Bill 2938 would allow recreational vehicles, working or not, to serve as "temporary" dwellings. But how the temporary nature of those dwellings would be policed is not dealt with in the bill. Worse, these "temporary" dwellings are not required to be connected with either septic or sewer services; not even if those sanitary facilities are conveniently located. Ignoring this very basic sanitary issue puts our groundwater sources, including our drinking water sources in these rural areas at significant risk from untreated effluents from such unregulated new dwellings.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns with these two bills.
Paul Lipscomb