



OREGON FARM BUREAU TESTIMONY

House Human Services and Housing Committee

March 14, 2017

Please Oppose HB 2937 and HB 2938 Siting of New Non-Farm Dwellings on Farmland

Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Farm Bureau asks you to oppose HB 2937 and HB 2938, which would allow siting of new housing on farmland in Oregon. While OFB supports the need to provide affordable housing in Oregon, we do not think the solution is to place new houses on farmland. Oregon's land use planning system is a keystone to protecting agricultural land, and ensuring that urban needs are met while protecting our best resource land. HB 2937 and HB 2938 risk undermining these goals.

By way of background, OFB is Oregon's largest grassroots agriculture association, representing 7,000 farming and ranching families across the state. Our mission is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for our members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole.

HB 2937 would allow the construction of a new non-farm dwelling near an existing dwelling, and HB 2938 would permit permanent residence in a recreational vehicle near an existing dwelling. While we support affordable housing, it should not be sited in farm zones. Farm zones lack access to public transportation, public sewer, and water services, and additional families in farm zones could strain already overburdened emergency services. Most farm zones are not located close enough to the jobs and services that would be required for effective affordable housing, which makes these houses much more likely to be vacation homes or homes for viewscape-oriented dwellers than affordable housing.

Allowing potentially hundreds of new dwellings in farm zones would also create the potential for significant conflict with existing agricultural operations. New dwellings would increase traffic on rural roads, which would be particularly hazardous during harvest. Farmers already narrowly avoid incidents with impatient drivers during harvest and adding more cars would only exacerbate these issues. In Oregon, farmers are also having issues with new people moving into farm zones and not understanding how agriculture works. We are seeing increasing incidents of complaints from neighbors – people who chose to come live in the middle of farmland - about noise, dust, hours of operation, and

other impacts, particularly during harvest when farmers are working from dusk till dawn seven days a week to make sure crops get to market.

Help keep farming in Oregon viable and limit conflict with new non-farm uses. Please oppose HB 2937 and HB 2938.

Please do not hesitate to direct questions to Mary Anne Nash at Oregon Farm Bureau (maryanne@oregonfb.org).