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Testimony re: HB 2937 & HB 2938

It has come to our attention that there are two bills attempting to expand the number of dwellings on MUA, EFU and rural residential lands. We strongly oppose any additional lawful dwellings on rurally designated lands. The reason Oregon continues to have open spaces, farmland, forests, and wildlife habitat is due to a strong commitment to the protection of these lands.

Housing help for farm workers on EFU land is already allowed. Temporary hardship dwellings for ill and disabled family members is also allowed.

The types of structures that have been converted or built to create additional unlawful and unpermitted dwellings on Sauvie Island, on EFU and MUA land, have been to create income flow for Air BnB's, Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) and other short-term, high-profit vacation rentals ranging from \$100-\$450 per night. Hardly affordable housing.

The need for more affordable housing in the Portland Metro area is apparent – but the solution to that is not to go into Rural Reserve areas, EFU, MUA and Forest areas – and triple the density – by adding additional permanent and RV dwellings. Homeowners can rent out a room – or their entire home – as affordably as they wish – under the current law. What they may not do, is add additional structures or convert structures into permanent dwellings – or use RVs to become apartments for long term renters or a place to stay while they rent out their home for high nightly profit.

Using Sauvie Island as an example, allowing this use could literally triple the number of vehicles on the roads daily, on already over-taxed roadways. It would also triple building density and population density. This goes entirely against the long range planning for the area, which is committed to preserving farmland, open spaces, forest lands, habitat and low-density areas.

Recently, a neighbor (on MUA land) converted a structure that had been a large storage building into an Air BnB – and began to rent it out nightly. They were aware the structure could not be used as a dwelling. All of a sudden we began to see 1-3 cars roll in nightly – strangers walking on farmland (not their own land) behind our property – noise, loud music, etc. We suspected that they had begun to use it as an Air BnB – went on a website – found that to be true. We talked with them – registered our concerns – to no avail, until we went to Multnomah County and requested that they enforce the law. Even then, the behavior did not change until a financial fine was assessed. This had nothing to do with affordable housing whatsoever. In a very short period of time – 16 or so Air BnB's cropped up in about a year's time on Sauvie Island. All unpermitted. I believe there were a few on the VRBO site as well.

The law allows people to rent out a room in their home now. Allowing an RV to become a residence on a property, may allow the homeowner to move into the RV – and rent out their entire house – for a night, a weekend, etc – This type of use will continue to chip away at the rural character of these lands – and do nothing to provide affordable housing for anyone.

The Land Use Laws of this State and Multnomah County – have allowed there to be viable farmland close-in to urban areas, allowed there to be forests and wildlife areas to experience, and have kept a type of sprawl from occurring that can be seen across this nation. We value and treasure the immense

thought, care and work that has gone into trying to keep Oregon and Portland livable and desirable. To allow the tripling of density in rural areas goes in the wrong direction. We strongly oppose these bills – and instead suggest that planning go into areas designated as Urban Reserves – NOT Rural Reserves.

We urge you to use other methods to address the need for affordable housing rather than ruin rural properties and the unique character and irreplaceable habitat they provide.

Sincerely,

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