

Testimony by Charlotte Lehan in Support of HB 3012

Scheduled for public hearing on March 14, 2017

Before the House Committee on Human Services and Housing

My name is Charlotte Lehan. I have served as mayor and city councilor for the city of Wilsonville and as a Clackamas County Commissioner. For nearly 30 years I have been a stalwart supporter of Oregon's land use planning system, especially the preservation of farmland and have testified here many times on land use issues. I am also an advocate for Oregon history and heritage, currently serving on the Oregon Historic Marker Committee, the Oregon Heritage Tree Committee, and the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries.

I have watched through the years as one after another, small old farmhouses disappear from the rural landscape, especially if they are within commuting distance of metropolitan areas. Landowners are required to remove the older structure in order to build a new one, or they have to make it uninhabitable by removing plumbing or other infrastructure. The old house becomes a chicken coop or hay storage but little on-going maintenance is done and its demise is only delayed a few years.

The intent of HB 3012 is to provide the private incentive to maintain these older dwelling units on rural residential lands by allowing them to remain as an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) to the new primary dwelling unit. At the same time, it does not incentivize over-improvement because the older house is allowed to remain only as an ADU and cannot be subdivided and sold separately, in other words, "flipped" and sold for quick profit.

It provides an incentive to maintain these usually modest, smaller old farm homes rather than requiring their demolition in order to build someone's "dream home". Besides preserving our history and architectural heritage, these dwelling units can provide starter housing for younger family members, nearby housing for older family members, housing for caretakers and caregivers, or provide affordable rental housing that can keep rural workers near their jobs and off the roads with long commutes. It expands housing choice by maintaining some of these modest homes that are often in the 1000 sq. ft. range rather than requiring their removal in favor of the 4,000+ sq. ft. homes that replace them.

I urge your support of HB 3012 and I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Lehan