

Dear Representative Clem and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

I urge you in the strongest terms to vote No on HB2222.

This bill would enable counties to reclassify farm or forest land that they deemed as 'non-resource' lands, enabling potentially vast areas of our rural counties to be developed that are now part of the beautiful open spaces between towns.

HB2222 offers no rationale for this proposal, no sense of why we need to authorize a serious break in our statewide land use system, which has served Oregon well for many years. In fact, the sponsors represent a very prosperous and growing region of the State, in which the primary city has recently finalized an approach to its UGB expansion. And in which the citizens have already spoken out against upending state land use laws to develop EFU lands.

Two years ago, Deschutes County explored the idea of reclassifying EFU lands that seemed to some people as meriting a 'non-resource' designation. Numerous public sessions were held around the county, and the conclusion from all of that participation and discussion was that there was no need to change the existing zoning, because there was already a well-established process for securing exceptions to the EFU designation when it did not apply.

Apparently the proponents of HB2222, who represent Deschutes County, were not impressed by this public opinion or were not paying attention to it in 2015. Today there is even less reason to change land use designations to support development in Deschutes county,

Under a special project, three southern Oregon counties initiated a process similar to that proposed by HB2222 and each of them failed to complete the study despite state funding, which is not offered under HB2222. All three counties found that the workload was overwhelming and cost more than the state subsidy they were given. If these counties failed to complete with state funding, it is hard to believe that the process will be useful to counties with no financial support.

If successful, HB2222 is likely to be a distraction at best for counties that try to implement it. At worst, it could put State approval behind what can best be termed as a land grab in rural areas.

Please do not let this misguided bill to get out of this committee.

Please vote No on HB2222.

Eva Eagle

Sisters, OR