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April 5, 2017

Helping to shape the use of our natural resources to protect the quality of life in Yamhill County.

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97901

RE: Testimony on HB 2937 & 2938

Chair Clem and members of the Committee:

Friends of Yamhill County works to protect natural resources through the implementation of land use planning goals, policies, and laws that maintain and improve the present and future quality of life in Yamhill County for both urban and rural residents. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the above bills.

We are strongly opposed to HB 2937 and HB 2938, especially the provisions that apply to EFU zones. EFU zones are industrial zones, not residential zones. They protect the state's #2 industry- agriculture. In 2008, there were already an average of 3 houses for every farm in the Willamette Valley. Then Measure 49, which replaced Measure 37, allowed thousands more. This proliferation of nonfarm dwellings in farm zones makes it much more difficult to actually farm. Neighbors who don't farm complain when plowing kicks up dust. Their dogs chase sheep.

As introduced, these two bills essentially allow every single lot or parcel in our industrial farm zones to build another house to rent to anyone, whether for long-term or short-term. Most farms have multiple parcels, which could mean multiple additional dwellings or residential RV's. Some parcels in farm zones are a 1-acre lavender patch or not in farm use at all. Under this bill they would also qualify for another nonfarm dwelling.

Even if these new dwellings are only allowed in rural residential zones, the bills fail to recognize that many areas are groundwater-limited. These additional water withdrawals may or may not come from existing wells, but they are still additional withdrawals and should not be allowed in groundwater-limited areas. In addition, these thousands of new residences won't be served by transit and won't be in walkable neighborhoods. In short, they'll make a mockery of our efforts to combat climate change.

There's a reason we have Urban Growth Boundaries. They have served us well. The many thousands of new residences these bills would authorize belong in our cities and towns, not in our countryside.

Please vote no on HB 2937 and 2938

Sincerely,

Sid Friedman
Friends of Yamhill County