

To: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Re: HB 2937 and HB 2938

HB 2937 & 2938 are another bad idea whose time should not come! They are a stalking horse intended to undermine the intent and effects of EFU zoning.

Recall that EFU zoning is a grand compromise whereby valuable farm land is preserved for agriculture in units that are efficient to farm productively, and residential development is concentrated within urban growth boundaries where the infrastructure to support it is present. Farmers pay property taxes commensurate with the economics of agricultural production and counties do not invest in the roads, police, fire and school infrastructure rural residential sprawl requires.

There are already too many ways to get additional dwellings onto working lands, regularly exploited by individuals and local authorities favoring private over public interests.

Many of these proposed new “accessory” dwellings will become short term vacation rentals, whose season in Oregon is 12 months long. These occupants will be likely to complain about accepted farming practices (dust, noise, working hours that extend from before dawn until after dark). They will try to pass large agricultural equipment on narrow, curving rural roads, endangering themselves and long time residents.

“Accessory dwelling units” should be accessory to the primary farming operation, but HB 2937 says nothing about their location on the property or their purpose, they will be simply another rural dwelling. NONE of the support costs of these additional dwellings are collected by the County officials granting the residence, they are instead picked up by all taxpayers, including all those urban residents already paying for urban level community services.

As a farmer and rural resident I urge you to reject these bills which can only bring extra tax costs to me and my colleagues while reducing our quality of life and degrading the economic environment in which we work.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important matter.

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