



Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 2435 (Guest Ranches)

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use

From: Central Oregon LandWatch

Date: February 26, 2019

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee:

On behalf of Central Oregon LandWatch, we would like to express our concern with and opposition to the current version of HB 2435, which seeks to make permanent an allowance for "Guest Ranches" on exclusive farm use lands.

In 2018, this Committee heard testimony from Mr. Scott Campbell, President of Silvies Valley Ranch, in favor of HB 4031. In his testimony, he referenced the damaging effects of erosion on the ecosystem -- the long accretion of damage done by small adjustments in a streambed; the type of harm that is noticed only as a cumulative effect. He referenced the care and expense that it can sometimes take in order to restore such a complex system from that state.

Our concerns with HB 2435 do not stem from an opposition to any particular project, but from our concern in likewise halting the damaging effects of erosion. Oregon's land use system, established in part to help protect our agricultural resources, is also susceptible to substantial injury through small adjustments made over time. Small exceptions, extended sunsets, special legislative fixes, and other seemingly-minor adjustments cumulatively risk eroding Governor McCall's legacy and depriving future Oregonians of vital natural resources.

In terms of HB 2435 specifically, we would be much more comfortable with the measure should the Committee decide to require some reporting mechanism to ensure that the use of these "guest ranches" is indeed "incidental and accessory" to the underlying livestock operation (as is the intent of the statute which refers to the "continuing livestock operation" to which the guest ranch must continue to be incidental and accessory). Without such a provision, LandWatch remains opposed to the measure.

Paul Dewey