



April 3, 2019

*Via email: [haglu.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:haglu.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)*  
House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use  
State Capitol 900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony on HB 2456 (allows Malheur county farmland to be rezoned for residential uses without Goal 3 or Goal 14 exceptions)

Dear Chair Clem and members of the Committee:

Thrive Hood River (formerly Hood River Valley Residents Committee) is one of Oregon's oldest local land use advocacy groups. Since 1977 our mission has been to protect farms, forests, special wild places and the livability of urban and rural communities in Hood River County. Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns about HB 2456.

The intent of Senate Bill 100 way back in the 1970's was to preserve and protect Oregon's farms and forests. HB 2456 works against this intent by allowing non-farm housing to be built on EFU lands in violation of long held state policy against this practice which supported by LCDC and DLCDC for the past 40+ years.

Additional housing alone does not provide long-term economic benefits. Without appropriate industrial and/or commercial enterprises, benefits from such housing only accrue to the builders at the time of construction. Indeed, dispersed non-farm residential development on EFU zoned land is likely to lead to conflicts with farm and ranch operations and make Eastern Oregon's most lucrative industry—agriculture—less viable. There is an inherent incompatibility of non-farm residential housing with agricultural activities. This incompatibility potentially increases the agricultural costs and/or causes agricultural uses to be downsized or ended as a result.

Oregon's land use system is not the cause of declining population and economic opportunities in Eastern Oregon. Malheur County would be better served if the Legislature turned its attention to investing in programs and policies directly related to economic development if economic vitality is the goal.

Allowing this exemption from Oregon's statewide land use program would provide a bad precedent and encourage similar encroachments into other rural counties whenever there are economic struggles. Over the long haul, this approach would backfire. Eroding land use protections for Oregon's farms and forests ultimately undermines the economic viability of resource lands throughout the state.

We urge you to vote no on this bill.

Best regards,

Dale Hill  
President