

To: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Re: Support for HB 2225, Pertaining to Forest Template Dwellings

Public Hearing: May 7, 2019, 1PM, HR C

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Olsen, Members of the Committee,

My name is McKenzie Bowerman. I am in support of House Bill 2225. I stand here today as an Oregonian who cares about our land use planning system. I believe it contributes to the livability and well being of our State. It results in efficient growth close to services while conserving resource lands for compatible uses and for future generations.

Thanks to the bold foresight of prior generations, we have largely avoided urban sprawl, as well as what former Governor Tom McCall referred to as “sagebrush subdivisions and coastal condo-mania”, which is more common in other states.

I am also here as an owner/operator of forest and farm lands in Lane, Douglas and Wheeler Counties. Just as industrial uses are not ideal in a residential zone, new dwellings in resource zones pose similar incompatibilities. Issues can include complaints of noise and dust from agricultural machinery, as well as the risks associated with wildfires.

An additional consequence of permitting extra dwellings is extra market driven property valuation. As a result, resource properties become more expensive than underlying agricultural practices can support. We are seeing farm and forest uses being supplanted by very low density residential uses.

I was recently the petitioner in a land use case involving a neighboring forest tract that sought approval for three template dwellings on contiguous parcels. Prior to the dwelling applications, the property underwent significant reconfiguration, including multiple property line adjustments, the discovery of historical and un-assessed lots, and the re-naming of the same owner in different ways to get around the one template dwelling per tract standard. This property would not have qualified for the new dwellings in its original configuration.

This is not a unique case. These nuanced template dwelling actions are a pattern and practice common in the State. This is particularly true in rural areas near larger urban populations.

I have studied House Bill 2225, and I believe it is a reasonable approach to correct areas of abuse going forward, with out penalizing land owners who have made changes in the past. This bill essentially restores template dwelling law to the intent originally contemplated by legislature. I ask you to please join me in support of it.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a cursive name.