

Testimony of Oregon Family Farm Association
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
May 4, 2021



Opposition to SB 605A, Annexation of Rural Lands

The Oregon Family Farm Association is dedicated to protecting the heritage of Oregon's family farms, helping farmers and educating the public about the health and future of family farming in Oregon. **OFFA is opposed to SB 605A which seeks to make significant changes to Oregon's annexation law.**

While the goal to enhance rural fire protection is laudable, SB 605A as drafted appears to create uncertainty for affected property owners that would be subjected to annexation and taxed for services with no guarantee of service delivery. Additionally, the bill contains an arbitrary seven-mile buffer that in some parts of the state will pit one Rural Fire Protection District (RFPD) against another RFPD. While that may result in the best delivery of service to the property owner, the bill doesn't exempt properties that are already served by an existing RFPD.

OFFA offers the following suggestions to improve SB 605A:

- Property owners subject to annexation should receive a notice of that proposal along with the ability to provide testimony to the county body making the decision.
- Provide a process for affected property owners to vote on the proposal.
- State that RFPDs may annex land within a certain distance of the station if the landowner requests it.
- Provide that the RFPD seeking the annexation make a declaratory statement on services they would provide to properties proposed for annexation. Furthermore, a data-driven statement for the distance from the RFPD should be stated.

SB 605A, while well-intentioned, needs clarification before it is advanced.

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