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January 23, 2023

To: Members House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use,
Natural Resources & Water

**RE: "No" on HB 2487 – Wedding & Event Venues in
Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) Zone East of the Cascades**

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

Friends of Marion County (FoMC) is an independent 501(c)(3) farmland protection organization founded in 1998. Our mission is to protect farm and forestland, parks, and open space in Marion County.

CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

With the ending of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions Marion County has experienced a flood of applications. Since Marion County is considered to have some of the most productive agricultural lands in Oregon, the county has been the focus of conversion of this farmland to non-farm uses. Among the applications are events unrelated to farm practices, non-farm and farm dwellings, conditional use applications for many other uses including temporary hardship dwellings, dog boarding and training facilities, educational experience centers, solar energy facilities, and many others.

Sullivan and Eber's article in the San Joaquin Agricultural Law Review lists more than 60 non-farm uses from 1963-2009.¹

1000 Friends of Oregon in its June 2020 report, Death by 1000 Cuts: A 10-Point Plan to Protect Oregon's Farmland, has outlined conditional uses and other applications which are harmful to the preservation of farmland.²

HB 2487 allows for counties to set conditions but, as we have witnessed many times, each county will likely impose different conditions, both in the type of the event and quantity of participants.

However, once these permits are issued there will likely be no enforcement of conditions.

CONCLUSION

HB 2487 further erodes the farmland base in Oregon, east of the Cascades. We oppose this bill and request the committee to do so as well.

Thanks so much for listening.

Roger Kaye, President
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1. Summary of Uses Allowed in EFU Zones, Appendix 1, pgs. 63-69, Farmland Protection in Oregon 1961-2009, THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD: FARMLAND PROTECTION IN OREGON 1961 – 2009, SAN JOAQUIN AGRICULTURAL LAW REVIEW, VOLUME 18 2008-2009 NUMBER 1

The initial non-farm uses provided for in 1963 were public and private schools, churches, public or non-profit group parks, playgrounds or community centers, golf courses, utility facilities, and farm dwellings. Except for the deletion of farm dwellings between 1967 and 1969 there were no changes to the permitted non-farm uses. In 1973 commercial activities in conjunction with farm use, mining activities, private parks, playgrounds, hunting and fishing preserves and campgrounds, commercial power generating facilities and non-farm dwellings were added. From 1975 to 2009 there were 61 additional changes, almost all new uses.

2. Death by 1000 Cuts: A 10-Point Plan to Protect Oregon's Farmland, June, 2020, Executive Summary <https://friends.org/news/2020/6/death-1000-cuts-10-point-plan-protect-oregons-farmland>