

Submitter: Ramsey McPhillips

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB1537

Dear Senate Committee On Housing and Development,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the current version of SB 1537. While I understand the urgent need to address Oregon's housing shortage, I firmly believe that this should not come at the expense of our state's landmark farm protection laws.

It is crucial to recognize that the housing shortage primarily affects urban areas, and agricultural lands should not bear the burden of solving this issue. Unlike urban properties, agricultural lands are taxed based on their business value, which is commensurate with their agricultural use. Penalizing rural lands through legislation like SB 1537 is not only unjust but also overlooks the unique challenges and contributions of farming communities that are constantly battling speculative development that upends our reduced tax base.

Before considering measures that could potentially impact our valuable farmland, I urge decision-makers to explore alternative solutions such as urban infill, vertical expansion, and repurposing of existing urban lands. These options should be prioritized to minimize the encroachment on agricultural areas.

It is essential to listen to the voices of rural residents, particularly farmers, who often lack representation in discussions surrounding urban planning UGB decisions that encroach on our lands. As someone deeply invested in protecting Oregon's agricultural heritage, I implore you to reconsider the implications of SB 1537 on rural communities and their livelihoods.

I urge you to prioritize responsible and sustainable urban development that respects the integrity of our farmland and ensures the long-term viability of Oregon's agricultural sector.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ramsey McPhillips
McPhillips Farms
Since 1862