



February 9, 2025

Rep. Pam Marsh
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2400

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness,

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities, protect family farms, forests and natural areas, and provide transportation and housing choices. **1000 Friends opposes HB 2400.**

HB 2400 authorizes every landowner in rural Oregon to site an additional house on their property for resale. This includes every property in Oregon’s designated agricultural and forest reserves, as well as every property in the nearly one million acres of land zoned for rural residential use.

The bill purports to be about family housing, but once the dwelling application is approved for a family member, there is no requirement that the owner’s family member live in the new house. The family member can “move out” and the owner is free to lease the house to anyone for 18 months. After that, the owner may sell the house to anyone.

HB 2400 is unnecessary. There are already seven different ways to get a new house approved on farm land, and six different ways to get a new house approved on forest lands. Specifically, Oregon law already allows new homes for relatives of agricultural and forest land managers. It also allows additional new homes for unrelated farm workers.

HB 2400 is harmful to agricultural and forest land. Oregon counties already approve hundreds of new houses in exclusive farm use and forest conservation zones each year. They also convert hundreds of acres of agricultural and forest land for residential development.

- The American Farmland Trust estimates that roughly half of the farmland conversion in Oregon between 2001 and 2016 was due to low-density residential development.
- HB 2400’s outright doubling of rural residential densities threatens Oregon’s No. 2 and No. 3 industries that depend on large blocks of undeveloped land to operate.

- Locating more housing in and around farm and forest areas increases conflicts with common farming and forestry practices, increases traffic on farm roads, creates additional demand on limited water resources, and can increase wildfire risk.
- More houses on agricultural and forest land increase the cost of those lands, putting it out of the reach for the next generation of farmers and forest land managers. The mere opportunity for additional residential development drives up land prices beyond what farmers, ranchers, and forest land managers can afford.

HB 2400 is designed to encourage speculative land development in Oregon limited supply of world-class agricultural and forest lands. People who want or need an extra home on their rural property already have a variety of mechanisms to secure such a home, including dwellings specifically designated for family members. HB 2400 is unnecessary and harmful.

Please vote “no” on HB 2400.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jim Johnson
Working Lands Policy Director