

2/25/25

On Behalf Of: Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development Measure,

Appointment or Topic: SB878

Dear Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson and Committee Members, please oppose SB 438 and SB 878. These bills are bad policy and duplicate HB 2400.

This bill is idealistically written but will not pan out in actual practice. While I myself and family are rural land owners and have occasionally thought about how it would be nice to have another house on our property, we also know it would fundamentally change the land that is zoned EFU.

There would be no regulation as to if a family member actually was living in the house and if that family member moved away anyone can move in or the building as the bill states can be used for another purpose. Or if the land is sold the family designation is no longer applicable. Therefore, increasing the value of the land and making the classic five acres with large house that everyone wants more readily available. Given the stringent regulations EFU land falls under especially in Washington County these bills essentially erode that designation. This is another attempt to chip away at Oregon land use laws and another attempt at rural in fill.

I personally believe most of the houses built would likely be large square footage rural McMansions that would be in place for eventual resale of rural properties. With more buildings comes more driveways, infrastructure, permits, taxes, that counties are desperately seeking. If family members want to build another structure on rural lands there are ways such as through health hardships, worker dwellings and much more.

This matters because it's unnecessary. Oregon law already allows new homes for relatives of agricultural and forest land managers, as well as additional new homes for unrelated farm workers. 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. And the mere opportunity for additional residential development further threatens farming as it drives up land prices beyond what farmers, ranchers, and forest land managers can afford.

Protection of farm and forest land under the Department of Land and Conservation Development's longstanding Land Use Goals 3 and 4 is critical to maintaining the agriculture and forestry land base upon which our natural resource-based industries and conservation efforts rely. These lands are critical to Oregon's economy in providing jobs and food and fiber, as well as conservation values.

Farmland is open and easy to build on and often seen as a vacant space ready to be developed. Building these homes would not make it easier for families to keep land in the family for future generations. Once the land is built on it changes forever, Oregon does not need this right now and I think our legislators can come up with better options than this. I would like to see some

data to support these bills are actually needed and would help Oregon and rural areas rather than just trying to meet housing goals. I still believe in the motto, "Keep Oregon Green." I hope you do to. VOTE NO.

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