

Submitter: Scottie Jones
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or
Topic: SB77

March 4, 2025

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 77. I urge you to oppose this bill.

I have been a sheep farmer in Benton County since 2003 and I have hosted a farm stay on our property since 2008. I am a legally permitted Conditional Use Home Occupation. This lodging on our farm has been crucial not only to the sustainability of our operation but also to the guests we have hosted.

As a relatively small operation on 70 Coast Range acres with 20 acres of pasture, our production and sale of 30-35 locker lambs per year does not cover the cost of fixing our tractor, yet we wish to provide a source for local food in our area. The "home occupation" helps us to do that. When I say the lodging has been crucial for our guests, I am referring to the education they get (either direct or indirect), when they stay with us, about farming in Oregon, food production, and the challenges farmers face every day to bring food to their table.

I see all these comments here that talk about how we farmers want to build hotels on our property and become event venues, when what we are really trying to do is just be sustainable and keep farming. You don't need a hotel to do that, but you do need some forms of lodging that work with the infrastructure to keep things simple (i.e. you don't put the yurt in the middle of the hay field or you use the farm house you already have or...). Call it rural economic development if you want because we provide jobs for local residents and send guests to our local businesses, just don't put so many limits on us that we can't be successful.

If all you do is protect farm land but don't protect the farmer by allowing him or her to be entrepreneurial, without added restrictions on size of house (yes, some of us have inherited large farmhouses that are bigger than 2000 sq feet) or where the farmer has to live, then you will lose the farmer and end up with non-productive land...which in the end will be sold to someone who just buys it for the large house and the land is out of production for good so you lost your farm land anyway.

Please protect the farmer and we will protect the land. We are good at it. We care for

it. If it increases in value because we have done a good job, then bully for us. This legislation is just wrong and seems written by folks who have no idea how hard farming is to be sustainable.

Thank you for your time. Please vote NO on this bill.

Sincerely, Scottie and Greg Jones
Leaping Lamb Farm
Alsea OR