



March 6, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Wildfire
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 78 – Support

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 78. Central Oregon LandWatch (“LandWatch”) is a land use and conservation advocacy organization that, for more than 35 years, has protected Central Oregon’s farm and forest lands, rivers and springs, fish and wildlife, and vibrant communities. We work to conserve the region’s ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and working rural lands balanced with a responsible, sustainable approach to planning and fostering thriving communities.

LandWatch supports SB 78. This bill would limit the size of “replacement dwellings” on rural land to either 110% of the dwelling that is being replaced or 2,500 square feet. Without these reasonable restrictions, we are seeing massive new luxury homes built on Oregon farm and forestland that are “replacing” modest farmhouses.

Here in Deschutes County, our rural farmland and the livelihoods of farmers are under attack by luxury development interests. Rather than protecting farmland for farm use, our county is allowing exorbitant luxury housing to both directly displace farmland and make farmland inaccessible to farmers. When modest farmhouses are replaced with mansions, that property becomes too expensive for farms to afford. The real estate market responds, and suddenly what should be cheap farmland becomes inaccessible to farmers when developers know they can “replace” modest farmhouses with mansions, without any consideration of whether the replacement dwelling is needed to support farm use of farmland.

For example, these dwellings have been approved as “replacement dwellings” on farmland in Deschutes County:





Figure 1. 65245 Cline Falls Road, Bend, OR 97703. 12-acre irrigated property zoned EFU. A 1971 manufactured dwelling was replaced with an 8,358sqft dwelling in 2008 and sold for \$12mil in 2020.



Figure 2. 64090 Tyler Road, Bend, Or 97703. 58 acre irrigated property zoned EFU. An 1140sqft dwelling built in 2007 was replaced with a 6,676sqft dwelling in 2009 via building permit number B68596. Sold for \$7.15mil in 2021. The original 2007 dwelling was never removed.



Figure 3. 65050 Collins Road, Bend, Or 97701. 28 acre irrigated property zoned EFU. A 1,229sqft dwelling built in 1985 was replaced with a 4,717sqft dwelling in 2020 via application file no. 247-20-000261-AD.



Figure 4. 67975 Cloverdale Road, Bend, Or 97759. 20 acre irrigated property zoned EFU. A 1,984sqft dwelling built in 1940 was replaced with a 5,210sqft dwelling in 2018 via application file no. 247-18-000079-AD.

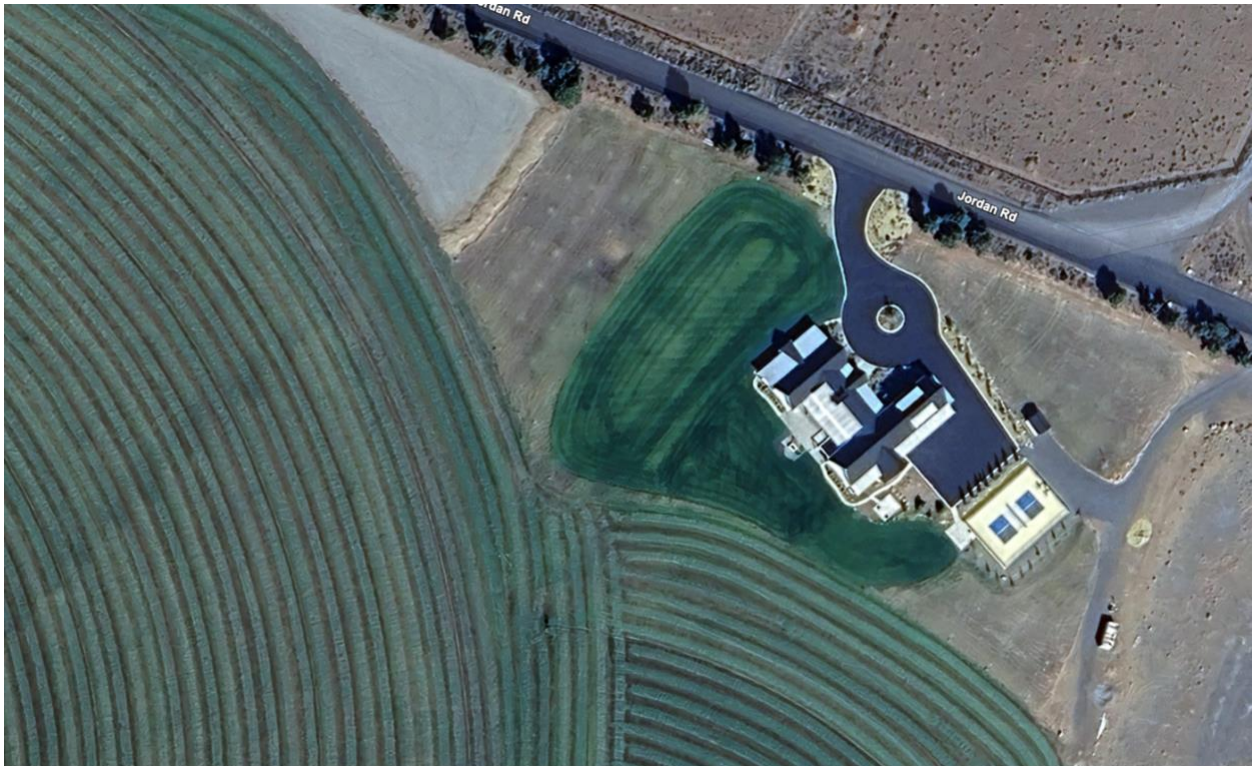


Figure 5. 16615 Jordan Rd, Sisters, Or 97759. 114-acre irrigated property zoned EFU. A 805sqft manufactured dwelling sited in 2004 was replaced with a 5,103sqft dwelling in 2019 via application file no. 247-19-000171-AD.

Large, luxury development does not support Oregon’s hardworking farmers, and in fact it does the opposite by inflating the price of farmland. SB 78 would impose common-sense limitations on the size of replacement dwellings, supporting the sustainability of the farmland and forestland real estate markets.

LandWatch respectfully requests this Committee pass SB 78 out of committee.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Regards,

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Rural Lands Program Director & Staff Attorney
Central Oregon LandWatch