



Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

March 6th, 2025

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network, regarding SB77 and SB78, which address two major loopholes in Oregon's exclusive farm use protections: home occupations and replacement dwellings.

SB77 addresses the loophole which is being abused to allow large-scale hospitality and entertainment facilities on land designated for agricultural and timber production. SB78 will protect the Oregon agricultural and forest land being lost to luxury home developers. This both takes land out of production and drives up the price of nearby agricultural and forest land.

*Oregon is losing nearly 300 tracts of agricultural and forest land every year for high-end residential development in the form of replacement dwellings.* Similarly, the vague definitions of "home occupation" are inviting nonresident business owners to convert working lands to luxury hotels and tourist destinations. This makes land unaffordable for farmers and ranchers, pricing them out of working lands, and putting agriculture – Oregon's 2nd largest economic driver – at risk.

*Protecting farmland is a critical climate mitigation strategy* because it ensures we have the land base for agricultural practices that sequester carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When agricultural land is developed and when it is lost, the ability to harness its carbon sinks is also lost forever. And new development is preceded by the removal of topsoil from the land, which causes stored carbon to be released back into the atmosphere. The development of agricultural land disproportionately impacts our nation's most productive, versatile, and resilient land. Of the 11 million acres lost or threatened between 2001 to 2006, [4.4 million were considered nationally significant agricultural lands](#). This land loss pushes agriculture production to more marginal land, which can require greater inputs to achieve comparable production levels.

We urge your support for SB77 & SB78 because they will help to preserve and protect our working lands, which will have both environmental and economic benefits for all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration and your service.