

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 77. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill.

As a small, full-time farmer, I know firsthand how challenging it is to keep a small farm financially viable. A legally permitted on-farm lodging operation can and will help sustain a business. This additional income is essential—not just for keeping a farm running, but also for educating visitors about agriculture, food production, and the everyday realities farmers face.

There's a misconception that small farmers are trying to turn their properties into hotels or large event venues. That's simply not the case. What we're asking for is the ability to remain financially sustainable while continuing to farm. Small-scale lodging—whether a farmhouse rental or a modest yurt—helps us do that. It also supports the rural economy by providing local jobs and driving business to nearby shops, restaurants, and services.

If we focus only on protecting farmland but not the farmers themselves, we will lose both. Restrictive measures like capping home sizes or dictating where farmers must live don't preserve farmland—they make it harder for farmers to survive. The reality is, when farmers are forced out, their land often transitions to non-productive ownership, taking it out of agricultural use permanently.

Farmers are the best stewards of the land—we care for it because our livelihoods depend on it. Please support us by rejecting SB 77. If you protect the farmer, we will continue to protect the land.

Thank you for your time and consideration.