



March 6, 2025

Re: Written Testimony in Support of SB 77 and SB 78

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

Oregon Agricultural Trust works collaboratively around the state to safeguard Oregon's farm and ranch lands and the rural communities that depend upon them. We work with farmers and ranchers, young and old, large-scale and small, to protect the agricultural land base on which they rely for their livelihood.

One of the biggest threats to the continuation of farming and ranching in Oregon and a foremost issue OAT seeks to address is the speculative inflation of farmland values created by more and more non-farm uses permitted on farmlands. While many of those exceptions to allowed farmland use may have been well intended in their allowance, the ultimate cumulative impact is that farmland fragmentation increases while farmland affordability decreases. One of the drivers of fragmentation and speculation is the ability to develop farmland intended for food production into lifestyle amenity properties where agricultural productivity is at best a secondary use. These properties often include large, luxury houses, far beyond the affordability for any farmer reliant on the productivity of the land to pay their bills. Worse, these houses may not even serve as a primary residence to the owner, but rather an amenity property to be rented out for the majority of the year.

It is undeniable that these luxury houses and rental properties are not supportable by an EFU minimum acres. Asking farmers to try and support mansions with agricultural revenues is an impossibility.

SBs 77 and 78 address two of the major threats to our designated agriculture and forest land preserves—the others including case-by-case rezoning of agricultural and forest land and the approval of new houses in farm and forest zones unrelated to agriculture or forest use. The cumulative impact of commercial, recreational and residential uses in our designated farm and forest zones is damaging agriculture and forestry and the families and communities that depend on these industries. We appreciate you taking this critical first step to address these problems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phoebe Autry', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phoebe Autry  
Southern Oregon Program Manager  
Oregon Agricultural Trust