

Submitter: Greg Jones
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 comment on SB 77. I urge you to OPPOSE this bill.

Having listened to the testimony yesterday from large acreage farmers who are 1000 Friends members, I heard time and again the same crafted verbiage of support for this bill throughout. They used the same few examples for loss of farmland that had little to do with this actual Home Occupation bill (example: UGB expansions) and made it seem like this was the reason for the loss. If there is any loss of farmland per square foot from Home Occupations, has the remaining farmland on the property actually been improved for higher production and yield because investment is being put in, no taken out? That would be worth investigating.

I need you to take a look at this legislation from the smaller farmer point of view. My wife and I run a sheep farm in the Coast Range where rich soils are scarce but our land is still classified as EFU. Most farms out here run livestock (or grow trees) as the most viable farming practice. It is hard to be sustainable on production only, so many have taken jobs off the farm. We didn't want to have to leave our farm to find jobs 25 miles away when we thought we had a viable alternative to diversify our income. In 2008 we applied for and were granted a Conditional Use Home Occupation permit to host guests overnight on our farm. All this talk of farmers wanting to build hotels is BS. We just wanted to be sustainable and put food into our local economy, while taking the opportunity to educate our guests about farming and sending them back to the city as an educated consumer.

As for the specifics to this legislation, you should know that the 1896 farmhouse we bought back in 2003 is larger than the 2000 sq ft this legislation proposes. What gives the state the right to dictate the size of our houses? I doubt any of the farmers giving testimony yesterday in favor of this bill live in houses that small. And how about all of you on the committee? Would you want the state to regulate the size of your house, even on farmland? It's not as if we are using up valuable pasture. Old farms, and new, keep their infrastructure confined within a certain area just to be efficient for utilities and convenience.

Finally, I take exception at what I also heard yesterday. There was an implication that if we can't make it in production alone as small farmers then we probably should

leave and do something else. I am totally insulted by this suggestion. My wife has said it and I will repeat it here, if you only protect farmland and don't allow your farmer to be entrepreneurial with their land, then you will lose that farmer and the land will fall out of production, the very thing you are trying to prevent. It's an Earl Butze move for consolidation of farmland that has got our country into the predicament it finds itself when it comes to the loss of small farms and the resulting degradation of its rural communities.

Please don't burden us with being poor farmers "because that's just the way it has always been." We are part of the fabric of our community and provide jobs and money back into our local economy when we are allowed to come up with creative solutions to be sustainable. We aren't hurting our land; we are protecting it and often improving it. Please vote NO on this bill.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Greg Jones