



Jefferson County Farm Bureau

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March 5, 2025

Chair Golden and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
900 Court St. NE Salem, Oregon 97301

For the record I am Mickey Killingsworth, the Secretary-Treasurer representing Jefferson County Farm Bureau

Support SB 77 and 78

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash and Committee Members,

Jefferson County Farm Bureau is a member of the Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF). We are located in Central Oregon, east of the Cascades. Jefferson County Farm Bureau was established in 1947 after the North Unit Irrigation District was formed and water was available to irrigate with.

When you hear that **“they aren’t making anymore farm land”** that is true for Jefferson County. There are only 59,000 acres that can be irrigated and that is limited to the NUID system and amount of water that is allocated by law. We raise over 50% of the carrot seed provided worldwide. We also raise most of the Kentucky Blue grass seed. We are just coming out of five years of a disastrous drought facing low commodity prices. We are commercial agriculture that adapts, but we need to be able to farm without more conflicts.

We have stopped designation resorts from being sited in our ag zone, fought measure 37 and supported measure 49, we had very few 49 claims. Now we are concerned as the pressure for affordable housing in Bend has put pressure on development in the small towns of Culver and Metolius (144 new homes in each town) that are surrounded by farm ground. We have worked with the City of Madras and County to encourage growth and housing development to go East where infrastructure was established years ago and there are no NUID water rights. There are to be at least 1,340 new houses built in Madras. We have seen what has happened in other areas of the state with home occupations and replacement dwellings, we need to keep the farm ground affordable for beginning farmers. These bills will help to do that.

As a county farm bureau, we support SB 77 and SB 78. This is a good start to keep Goal 3 for agriculture. Goal 3 has been under attack the last few sessions and this session appears to see even more attacks to weaken the protections that Goal 3 was authorized to provide agriculture.

We appreciate this committee’s efforts with SB 77 and SB 78. Are there any questions?

Sincerely,

Mickey Killingsworth

Mickey Killingsworth
Secretary-Treasurer
Jefferson County Farm Bureau
503.250.2460
Cc Vanek and G. Harris

Home of North Unit Irrigation District