



March 8, 2025

TO: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

RE: Support of SB 77 and SB 78

Friends of Polk County is a local citizen group that seeks to promote wise management of farm and forest land, a high level of livability in our urban and rural communities and a strong resource-based economy. Agriculture is a very important part of Polk County's economy.

We applaud the efforts of the Department of Land Conservation and Development in reviewing the status of farm and forestland in the state of Oregon. These reviews clearly show long term trends and where problems have developed in protecting our farm and forestlands for their intended uses. We also applaud the efforts of 1000 Friends of Oregon and Ag for Oregon in drafting bills that would close loopholes currently being used convert land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use to non-farm uses.

SB 77 would clearly define home occupations as small-scale businesses run by property owners residing in a dwelling on the property as an ancillary business to their farming. This was the original intent of the current legislation, but has been abused by some counties allowing hotels or other inappropriate businesses on farmland. Such businesses should be located in urban areas rather than on prime resource land.

SB 78 would limit the size of replacement dwellings to be more reflective of the original permit for a farm dwelling. Such a restriction is necessary to prevent developers from purchasing farm land at a low price, building an estate type dwelling and dramatically increasing the residential value of the property so that it is no longer at a price that is affordable for actual farmers.

We urge the committee to pass SB 77 and SB 78 to protect our farm land in the state of Oregon. Thank you for considering our comments.

On behalf of Friends of Polk County

Pat Wheeler, Board Member

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