

February 6 2026

Re: SB1578: Rural residential development on resource lands

Dear Sen. Nash, Rep. Owens, Skarlatos and the Committee on Housing and Development,

My name is Kathaleen B Parker, from Senate District 10 in South Salem, and I oppose because it will create a multitude of houses sprawling across Oregon's farm, ranch, and forest lands that are not related to farming or forestry.

- What it does: Overrides land use and environmental laws by allowing rural counties to rezone up to 50 acres of farm or forest lands for residential development, in one or several parcels, with a density of at least five houses per acres. Also allows accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on farm and forest lands, with houses that are not related to farming or forestry and are nearly three times larger than what is currently allowed for rural ADUs.
- Creates Dangerous Sprawl: SB1578 allows, for the first time, rezoning up to 50 acres in rural/frontier counties for high-density residential development (5+ units per acre).
- Ignores Infrastructure Needs: The bill permits development without requiring adequate water delivery, sewage disposal, or fire/emergency services, ignoring state safety mandates and straining existing district resources.
- Circumvents Land Use Standards: It allows for unsafe density (5+ units/acre) on small parcels, bypassing standard requirements for safe septic, setbacks, and land-use protections.
- Enables Corrupt Development: That drives up the price of the land, placing it out of reach to actual farmers, ranchers, and foresters, especially new and younger ones. These houses can also be sited without regard to wildlife, water availability, and more, setting up more conflicts. The proposal seems tailored for "cronies" and special interests to develop rural land by bypassing zoning, rather than meeting true housing needs.
- Sunset Date: While sunseting in 2034, it will cause permanent environmental and infrastructure damage in the interim.

Thank you for your time and support,

Kathaleen B Parker, Willamette Valley, Oregon