

February 12, 2026

Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon Legislative Assembly

RE: Opposition to SB 1578

Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

Harney County Farm Bureau appreciates the Legislature's efforts in SB 1578 to address housing challenges in rural Oregon, particularly provisions intended to support multi-generational families and continuity on working farms and ranches. We recognize that the bill contains two distinct components: authorization of additional rural residential development and expanded square footage flexibility for certain accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Our primary concern is with the rural residential development provisions of the bill. Authorizing additional rural residential rezoning outside urban growth boundaries places added pressure on Oregon's limited agricultural land base. Even when development is capped, these policies can fragment working landscapes, increase land values and speculation, and intensify conflicts between residential uses and accepted farm and ranch practices. Over time, these impacts make it more difficult for agricultural operations to remain viable, plan for the future, and transition to the next generation.

Harney County Farm Bureau is not concerned about the provisions related to expanding square footage limits for certain ADUs. We recognize that limited flexibility can provide practical benefits for farm and ranch families, such as housing aging parents, returning family members, or caregivers. In rural communities where housing options are constrained, this flexibility can help support family stability, succession planning, and continuity of the agricultural workforce.

In closing, while we appreciate the intent of SB 1578 to address rural housing needs, Harney County Farm Bureau must respectfully oppose the rural residential development provisions as drafted due to their long-term impacts on agricultural lands. We encourage continued work on solutions that support rural families and generational continuity without undermining Oregon's working lands.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Otley
President
Harney County Farm Bureau

