JULES BAILEY
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 42

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Testimony in Support of HB 2980
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
March 8, 2013

Chair Tomei and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2980, a bill which I am proud to co-sponsor.

This bill contains critical updates to the statutory language of the Farm Worker Housing Tax Credit program, and also extends the tax credit program until 2020. These changes are needed for the State of Oregon to continue to effectively serve the population of agricultural workers and their families who rely on the availability of affordable housing options.

Specifically, the bill changes the language of the program to focus on "agricultural workforce housing" instead of "farmworker housing." Agricultural workers are in need of year-round housing within a community—not temporary housing available only on farms. In practice, the tax credit program has matured to meet those needs, but by changing the name the state can formally recognize the true nature of the program.

Changes in the federal government's definition of the agricultural industry are also reflected in this bill. The federal government recently extended the definition of the agricultural industry to include agricultural processing and storage. To ensure that all workers that support Oregon's agricultural economy are given the opportunity to live in affordable housing on a continual basis, the change in the nomenclature of the tax credit program is necessary.

Further, the extension of the program's sunset to 2020 ensures that farmers, workers, community organizations, and government agencies can continue to support the improvement and creation of affordable housing for Oregon's agricultural workforce. This program has a proven track record of success and this bill will ensure Oregon's agricultural industry can continue to rely on quality workers.

Thank you for taking the time to consider HB 2980.

Jules Bailey
State Representative, District 42