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House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

March 3, 2015

RE: HB 2831

Chair Clem and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony supporting HB 2831. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

Oregon's land use program enjoys strong support across the state. According to the Oregon Values and Beliefs Survey, "[t]wo-thirds of Oregonians (66%) consider protection of productive farm and forest land from development very or somewhat important. The question leading to this result made clear that saying important implied support for some increase or reallocation in tax dollars to improve these protections."¹ These results were fairly consistent across urban and rural regions. Oregonians see an economic value in protecting our natural resource lands.

Further, Oregonians support the primary land use tool that we use to protect these important lands. "[T]wo-thirds of Oregonians (66%) favor the statement that new development should occur within existing cities and towns to save farmland and stop sprawl. . . ." Oregonians overwhelmingly support urban growth boundaries and protection of resource lands.²

Perhaps this is because Oregonians have seen firsthand the success of the land use program. It has prevented rural sprawl – between the 2000 census and the 2010 census no net rural housing units were added in Oregon while in Washington rural housing units went up by 6.2% and in Idaho they went up 16.7%. As a result, farmers can keep farming and foresters can keep managing forests without conflict from incompatible uses. In fact, ninety-eight percent of all non-Federal land in Oregon that was in resource land uses in 1974 remained in these uses in 2009.³ In short, the land use program has broad support within Oregon and it works.

As a result, agriculture remains Oregon's second largest industry: *1 out of 8 jobs in this state is agriculture-related*, and the industry is directly and indirectly linked to about \$22 billion in sales

¹ The findings are drawn "from three surveys conducted in April and May 2013. Final sample sizes were 3971 respondents for Survey #1, 1958 for Survey #2, and 1865 for Survey #3. The questionnaires and findings are available at www.oregonvaluesproject.org."

² Farmlands and forest lands are collectively referred to as "resource lands."

³ Oregon Department of Forestry, "Land use Change on Non-federal Land in Oregon and Washington" available at http://www.oregon.gov/odf/RESOURCE_PLANNING/land_use_in_OR_WA_web_edited.pdf

of goods and services, accounting for 15% of the statewide total of sales involving all industry sectors. *Agriculture is traded-sector* – 80% is sold out of state and 40% is exported out of the country, bringing new dollars into Oregon. And those figures have been increasing almost steadily for two decades. No other Oregon industry can tell that story. 1000 Friends of Oregon believes we should protect this key asset: agricultural land should stay in agricultural use to support Oregon second largest industry and the hundreds of thousands of Oregonians who depend on it.

Similarly forestry remains Oregon's third largest industry accounting for more than 76,000 jobs.⁴ This is despite a 90% decline in harvest on federal forestlands.⁵ Due, in part, to protection under Oregon's land use program, Oregon's private forestlands have continued to be a productive source of timber and jobs.

Because of the importance of farming and forestry to the state we support HB 2831. When Measure 49 was passed by the voters back in 2007 it included a simple mechanism to encourage continued resource use⁶ on resource lands even after a Measure 49 claim was executed. It requires newly partitioned lots from Measure 49 waivers to be 2 acres or smaller on high-value resource lands and 5 acres or smaller on other resource lands. This ensures that, of the three lots that can result from a Measure 49 claim, one will be large enough to support commercial agriculture. However, Measure 49 did not ensure that a subsequent property line adjustment would not reconfigure the lots increasing the size of the smaller lots and making the larger lot too small for commercial agriculture. That has been happening. HB 2831 simply corrects that oversight.

Agriculture and forestry are economic engines in Oregon. To protect these economic engines we ask you to support HB 2831.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven D. McCoy
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⁴ According to the Oregon Forests Resource Institute *available at* <http://oregonforests.org/content/jobs>

⁵ See <http://oregonforests.org/content/harvest>

⁶ Generally, in land use law “resource use” refers to use for farming or forestry.