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**Via Electronic Mail**

May 8, 2019

**To:** Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; [and many others].

**Re: I DO NOT SUPPORT: [HB 2970 A]** "Mass Gatherings" in rural areas is a recipe for disaster.

"Mass Gatherings" are unfortunately growing more popular in the rural areas of Oregon as an outgrowth of the misguided and unenforced permit conditions defining Agritourism activities, incompetent and or corrupt County Commissioners and over-populated cities. I say "unfortunately" for good and just reasons. Rural Oregon does not have the required infrastructure to conduct "Mass Gatherings" in a safe and sane manner.

Rural Oregon is the heart and soul of the agricultural economies. The roads are narrow and not designed for high traffic flows. Farmer's operate their tractors, combines and other equipment, routinely, per statutorily mandated protections on Oregon's rural roads. Currently, Mass Gatherings create burdensome and oppressive safety hazards to Farmers operating their equipment and to local residents going about their personal business.

The "Mass Gatherings" themselves create a myriad of nuisances, including but not limited to; Traffic, parking, unacceptable amplification of noises, violent confrontations involving drug and alcohol abuse. Sanitation and solid waste issues are mitigated but usually are not sufficient and or adequate. Air quality suffers from the creation of dust plumes and exhausts from the many vehicles associated with "Mass Gathering" events. Sheriff Deputy patrols in my area of rural Yamhill County are virtually "non-existent" due to County Commissioner's political agenda.

It is reasonable and foreseeable that a "fire" of any sort could be accidently and or purposely started. Due to narrow roads, traffic, reasonable and foreseeable lack of a large accessible water sources; First Responders will be slowed and may not be able to "truck-in" enough water in a timely manner, to suppress a small fire from becoming a conflagration quickly enough to prevent injuries, loss of life and destruction of property.

Fire prevention methods such as; pre-positioning Police, large water-tankers and Fire Engine Companies, Ambulances in and or around the "Mass Gathering" are not considered relevant to the "Mass Gathering Permit Process" but, they should be. Mandatory funding to recoup 100% of costs incurred by local Police Agencies and Fire Districts should be statutorily incorporated directly into the "Mass Gathering" permitting process.

**[SB 696]** was created to remedy the defect in insurance cap of "Mass Gatherings" referencing the Oregon Tort Claims Act (OTCA), updating [ORS (433.730(1))]. The current insurance cap of [\$1,454,300] is still too low. The **[SB 696]** insurance cap of a measly [\$1,454,300] doesn't even qualify as "pocket-change." The **[SB 696]** insurance cap will not be sufficient to cover the damages caused by a catastrophic "wild-fire" that is the actual and or proximate cause, flowing from the "Mass Gathering" and or the "Mass Gathering's" ancillary activities.

"Mass Gatherings" in rural Oregon should be banned outright due to; the aforementioned safety concerns, for the protection of farm lands; equipment, structures, stored products, livestock and for the protection of the environment\*.

\*When it comes to protecting the environment, forget any help from the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction. Those yahoos are part of the problem.

**VOTE "NO" ON [HB 2790 A]!**  
*Respectfully submitted,*  
/s/ David S. Wall