



House Committee on General Government
OFB and OPOA Testimony on HB 3239
March 19, 2021

Chair Wilde and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 3239. Our organizations oppose HB 3239 as drafted, as it would drastically curtail the ability of many of our hemp processors to process their crops and would treat hemp and marijuana differently than any other commodity in Oregon, all of which are currently treated equally under Oregon's land use system and all of which are allowed to process their crops in a farm zone.

In 2019, the Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Property Owners Association were instrumental in passing HB 2844, which expanded the ability of all farms to vertically integrate. As farms around Oregon continue to diversify, the ability to vertically integrate operations becomes increasingly more critical. For many farmers, siting processing facilities on their farm can help support their farming operation and allow them to have some value-added production without having to pay outside processing costs. Presently, small scale operations are permitted subject to just a site review, while larger scale processing facilities have to have a conditional use permit, where the county would review the plans for the facility, and only approve a facility that passes the farm impacts test, meets local code requirements, and has any additional conditions related to traffic, fire prevention, or other issues that are raised in this local process.

We strongly oppose HB 3239. Oregon presently treats all crops equally under our processing statutes, and allows the processing of commodities in a farm zone to support our agricultural operations. We understand that the concerns that lead to this bill surrounded potential fire risks and impacts to neighbors of hemp or marijuana processing facilities. The existing land use process for processing facilities -particularly large-scale facilities - is more than adequate to address any concerns relating to impacts on neighbors from a processing facility related to a neighboring farm use. It would set a very dangerous precedent to disallow or set a different standard for processing one type of crop than other crops have to follow.

Critically, as we read the language in Section 4, this bill would have the potential to shut down existing processing facilities, which our members have invested significant resources in and which are essential to their ability to farm. Supporting processing commodities in farm zones is critical to the success of farming operations for many commodities and in many parts of the state. We strongly oppose the change in law proposed by HB 3239, and urge your opposition.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 3239 and please contact us if you have any questions.

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