



June 8, 2023

To: House Committee on Rules

Re: Comments from American Farmland Trust to oppose the dash-17 amendment to HB 3414

Dear Chair Fahey and members of the House Committee on Rules,

The mission of American Farmland Trust is to save the land that sustains us by protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. For more than 20 years, our Pacific Northwest program has monitored the landscape of agriculture in Washington. We oppose the dash-17 amendment to HB 3414 as a matter of farmland protection.

Our Farms Under Threat research shows that, between 2001 and 2016, Oregon lost 65,800 acres to urban and low-density residential development. While the statewide planning system has put Oregon at the top in the nation for farmland protection through land use policy, the state still stands to lose another 109,100 acres by 2040 if these development trends persist. The dash-17 amendment will exacerbate these trends by allowing local governments to circumvent the land use planning system to expand their urban growth boundaries, putting even more farmland at risk of development.

Existing urban growth boundaries already contain plenty of land for the development of new housing. The dash-17 amendment discourages local governments from rezoning land existing UGBs and removing other barriers to accommodate more housing. It ignores the needs for infrastructure to build out areas already designated for the much needed supply of housing. While these issues are politically difficult in local communities, it is necessary to maintain the integrity of Oregon's land use planning system to meet statewide goals to protect natural resources and respond to the climate crisis.

Please reject the dash-17 amendment to HB 3414.

Sincerely,

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