



House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Testimony in Opposition to HB 2487

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Hartman and Owens, and members of the committee,

Founded in 1977, Thrive Hood River is Oregon's oldest regional land use watchdog group. We work with the tools of Oregon's land use system to protect resource lands and to promote good planning policies within our vibrant communities.

Thrive advocates for changes in our zoning ordinances where there is a benefit to our communities. We also defend many of the virtues of our planning program when the bad legislation threatens them.

HB 2487 would be yet another tear on our badly bruised statutory protections for high-value, exclusive farm-use lands. These lands comprise some of the best soils in the world. They were envisioned to be exclusively reserved for farmers devoted to agriculture. Today they are anything but.

There are more than 60 allowed uses on farmland today, and this has two broad effects. It raises the price per acre and shuts out farmers looking to farm. In scenic swaths of farmland, as in Hood River, a lot of farmland is in disuse because enough income can be derived from STRs, agri-tourism events, and other non-farm commercial activities to justify buying and sitting on farmland without farming. Secondly, new commercial uses conflict with farming practices. In this way, this bill is particularly perverse in that it intends to make weddings an allowed Type 1 use.

The purpose of Goal 3 and our EFU protections was to render the land cheap enough so that the hard-enough enterprise that is farming would pencil out, providing a benefit to all Oregonians. Today, we are getting further and further from this goal. Additionally, the piecemeal legislation that year after year opens new loopholes for commercial uses on farmland is making our statutes unworkable and unenforceable. This decreases public trust in our counties' function and our laws.

Sincerely,

Nico Salter, executive director,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nico Salter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Thrive Hood River