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January 22, 2025

Senator Khanh Pham, Chair
Senator Dick Anderson, Vice-Chair
Senator Anthony Broadman
Senator Todd Nash
Senator Deb Patterson

RE: Opposition to SB 59, prohibiting restrictions on bee-keeping & hen-raising in planned communities

Dear Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson and Members of the Committee:

The Charbonneau District of Wilsonville strongly opposes SB 59, which would restrict our HOA and other planned communities in Oregon from regulating vegetable gardening and beekeeping and raising hens. This is the third session that this topic has come before the legislature, failing in both previous sessions; [HB 3322 \(2021\)](#), [SB 437 \(2023\)](#).

Charbonneau is an association of thirteen Homeowner Associations that together form the Charbonneau County Club. Our community is home to approximately 3,000 residents and has over 1,600 single-family homes, apartments, and condominiums, as well as independent, assisted and memory care housing for seniors. It is known for its natural beauty, vibrancy and small-town ambiance. Residents agree to deed restrictions and covenants that preserve the quality of life, natural surroundings and property values. Additionally, the community has three nine-hole golf courses in its central core.

In Oregon, the size of HOAs range from communities as small as 10 units to as large as 8,000 residences. They include multi-story condominiums, mobile home parks, and large properties east of the Cascades. HOAs are governed under state law (ORS Chapter 94) and managed by their residents, who understand their community's needs and values. This local self-governance is much more responsive to citizens within that community than a 'one-size-fits-all' statewide mandate.

We are vigilant regarding permissible activities in our planned community, including yards and gardens, to respect neighbors and preserve property values. Our residents approve these homeowner rules because they are common interests to the community. They are the product of diligent discussion and deliberation. This conscientious process and local control would be

overturned by SB 59. The bill does not consider unique local conditions, community governance and health, or the will of residents.

SB 59 is unnecessary, and has the potential for adverse and even deadly consequences for Charbonneau residents. The legislation is unnecessary because residents currently are able to have vegetable gardens, and can, through their elected homeowner board, cultivate other food sources.

Because Charbonneau is a densely housed community surrounding a public golf course, we are concerned that beekeeping puts neighbors and golfers at risk for bee stings, which can result in serious anaphylactic shock and death. The Centers for Disease Control states that approximately 62 people die annually from bee stings, a statistic that has been increasing over the last half dozen years.

Raising hens in a densely populated community on the rural fringe, with regular sightings of coyotes, raccoons and other wildlife, increases the danger to residents and their pets. We are an active pet-owning community. Raising chickens, which we all know easily escape their confines, in a residential community with walkers, golf carts, dogs, cats, and narrow roadways would be a public nuisance, and make our residents, pets and community as a whole less safe.

For these reasons, Charbonneau believes that beekeeping and raising hens in our densely housed golf community are agricultural practices that create an unacceptable risk to our residents and guests.

Clearly, the mandatory provisions of SB 59 are unsuitable in our planned community. Prohibiting beekeeping and raising hens maintains a higher level of community safety and is less risky to walkers, golfers, pets, and drivers without facing life-threatening hazards that would be a consequence of the bill. We believe that home gardens and small-scale food production are suitable in many communities, as permitted by their residents and neighbors, not by government mandate.

Please let local residents and governance decide if bees and hens are appropriate for their communities. Please vote NO on SB 59.

David Mauk, Board Member and Civic Affairs Committee Chair
Charbonneau Country Club Board of Directors

For more information: Greg Leo, Greg@theleocompany.com; (503) 804-6391