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February 7, 2025

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St., NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Oppose HB 2400**

**To Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness**

Friends of Marion County is an independent 501(c)(3) farmland protection organization founded in 1998. Our mission is to protect farm and forestland, parks, and open space in Marion County.

**We oppose the adoption of HB 2400 and we request that the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness reject this bill which will negatively affect the agricultural, forested, and public lands that sustain our communities. This bill disregards existing laws, especially our land use laws that encourage smart growth and the protection of agricultural and forest lands that Oregonians rely on for food, fiber, and jobs.**

#### PROBLEM

**HB 2400** would fragment Oregon's agricultural and forest lands by allowing an additional house on every rural property. It is written in a way to encourage short-term resale, with no safeguards for protecting these valuable lands that feed our communities. People who want or need an extra home on their rural property already have a variety of mechanisms to secure such a home, including seven different ways on farm land and 6 ways on forest lands. Plus, Oregon law already allows new homes for relatives of agricultural and forest land managers, and additional new homes for unrelated farmworkers.

**HB 2400 authorizes every landowner in rural Oregon to site an additional house on their property.** This includes all property in exclusive farm use and forest zones, as well as the nearly one million acres of land outside UGBs zoned for rural residential use in Oregon. The bill allows a bait-and-switch process, stating that the additional house must be for a family member, but only for the initial application. The family member can move out of the house any time after the application is approved, and the owner may then lease the house to anyone for 18 months. After that, the owner may sell the house to anyone.

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**HB 2400 is unnecessary.** There are already seven different ways to get a new house approved on farm land, and six different ways to get a new house approved on forest lands. Oregon law already allows new homes for relatives of agricultural and forest land managers. It also allows additional new homes for unrelated farm workers.

**HB 2400 is harmful to agricultural and forest land.** Oregon counties already approve hundreds of new houses in exclusive farm use and forest conservation zones each year. They also convert thousands of acres of agricultural and forest land for residential development.

- The American Farmland Trust estimates that roughly half of the farmland conversion in Oregon between 2001 and 2016 was due to low-density residential development.
- HB 2400's outright doubling of rural residential densities threatens Oregon's No. 2 and No. 3 industries that depend on large blocks of undeveloped land to operate.
- Locating more housing in and around farm and forest areas increases conflicts with common farming and forestry practices, increases traffic on farm roads, creates additional demand on limited water resources, and can increase wildfire risk.

More houses on agricultural and forest land increase the cost of those lands to purchase or lease, putting it out of the reach of the next generation of farmers and forest land

## CONCLUSION

The time is right for the legislature to pay serious attention to Oregon's farm, range, and forest land and the many resources those lands protect. Please stop the land speculation and conversion of Oregon's limited and precious agricultural and forest land resulting from unintended loopholes in existing land use statutes.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Roger Kaye, Pres.  
Friends of Marion County  
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