

Submitter: David Gutt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2400

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the good work you intend for us through your service. Oregon already possesses unique land use laws designed to preserve our way of life. Yes we have need for increased housing, but this bill should not be the way forward. As a resident of Bend in Deschutes County I am asking you to oppose HB 2400.

Allowing second dwellings 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—would threaten Oregon’s farmland, put pressure on groundwater resources, and add to our wildfire risk. This bill is a bad idea.

By rejecting this measure, you can:

Protect Farms and Forests – Oregon’s land use laws exist to keep farm and forest lands productive. HB 2400 would allow additional housing on these lands without requiring that housing to support agriculture or forestry, driving up land costs and making it harder for farmers and foresters to continue their work.

Keep Groundwater Clean – More rural housing would mean more wells and septic systems, straining already limited groundwater supplies and risking groundwater contamination as nitrate pollution from septic wastewater leaches into shallow aquifers.

Help Wildlife – In Central Oregon, our mule deer populations are plummeting due to habitat loss. Increasing development in sensitive areas would worsen this crisis.

Reduce Wildfire Risk – Oregon’s rural lands are already at high wildfire risk, but fortunately Oregon’s land use laws have put us a step ahead other states when it comes to mitigating our risk. This is not the time to take a step back! More homes mean more human-caused fires and more people in danger when fires occur, straining emergency services.

Please protect Oregon’s rural lands and reject HB 2400. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,  
David Gutt