

House Bill 2400:
Making rural housing less affordable
while destroying, farm, range, forest and natural resource lands.
Testimony of Robert Liberty February 10, 2025



Between 1983 and 2023 permits for more than **44,148 new, replacement and temporary homes** were approved in Farm, mixed Farm/Forest & Forest Zones



That is enough houses for everyone in...



Hillsboro

Or..



Bend

Or..



● Medford

● Ashland

Or..



A satellite-style map of the state of Oregon, showing the coastline on the left and the state boundary in white. Two locations are marked with yellow circles with red outlines: Albany in the north-central region and Springfield in the south-central region. The terrain is a mix of green forested areas and brownish, more arid-looking regions.

Albany




Springfield



Houses approved in Exclusive Farm Use Zones 1983-2023

- 23,156 new houses
- 8,311 replacement houses
- 2,404 temporary hardship houses (unenforced)



2,268 new “farm help” and “farmer relative” houses, were approved in Exclusive Farm Use Zones between 1983 and 2023.

 4 Beds  3 Baths  2,756 Sqft

 23.46 ac Lot Size  Farm And Agriculture



Houses approved in Forest Conservation Zones 1993-2023

- 7,279 new houses
- 2,348 replacement houses
- 650 temporary hardship houses

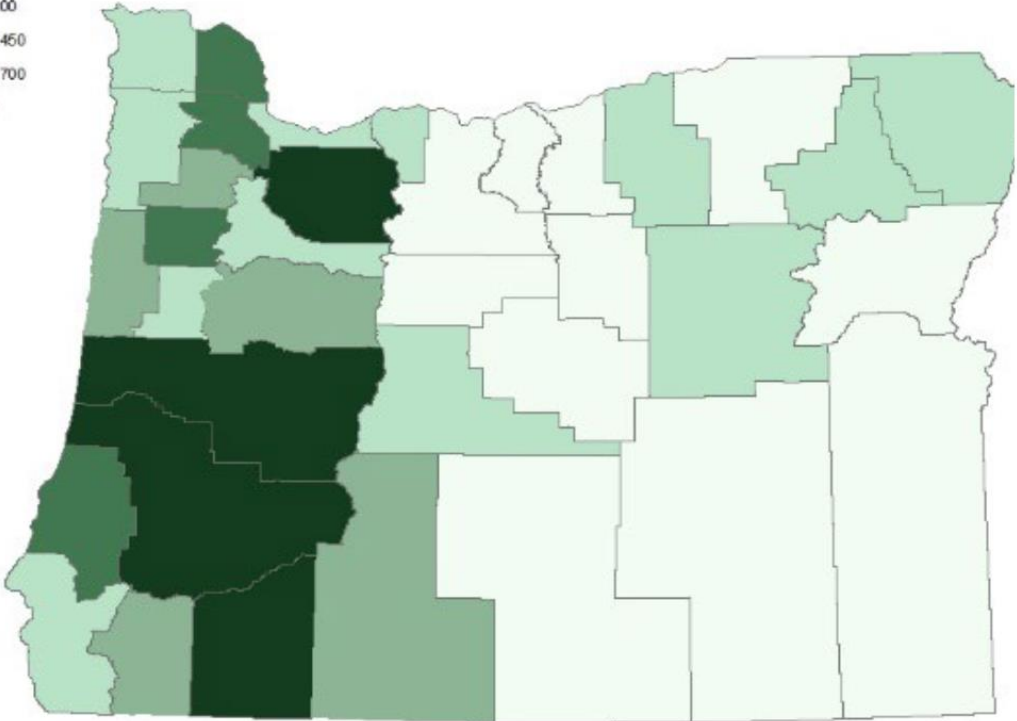


Fig. 27, Dwellings approved on forestland 1994-2021, all counties

Legend

Forest Dwelling Approvals 1994 - 2019

- 0 - 50
- 50 - 200
- 200 - 450
- 450 - 700
- > 700



Allowing more new houses in the country will do nothing to increase the supply of affordable housing and will cause or exacerbate serious problems.

Allowing more rural luxury homesite development will drive up rural home prices.



Luxury home site development, including replacement dwellings, drives up the price of other homes in the same market area.
(See my testimony on HB 2139.)

More houses in the country means less land for farming, ranching and forestry and more conflicts over farming, ranching and forestry practices.

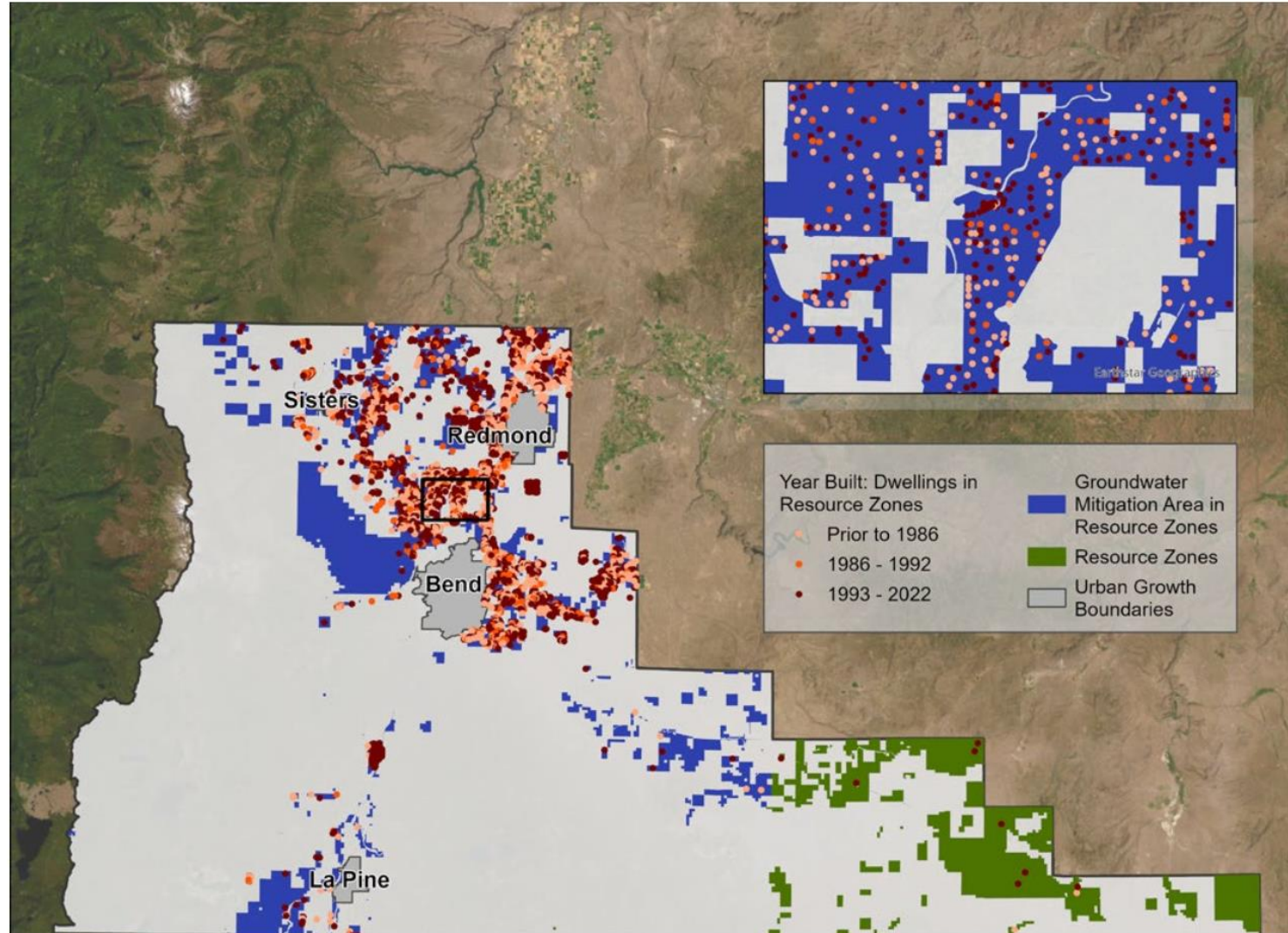


“The American Farmland Trust estimated that roughly half of the farmland conversion in Oregon between 2001 and 2016 was due to low-density residential development. This happens even while land remains under exclusive farm use zoning.” 2018-19 DLCD Farm& Forest Report page 3

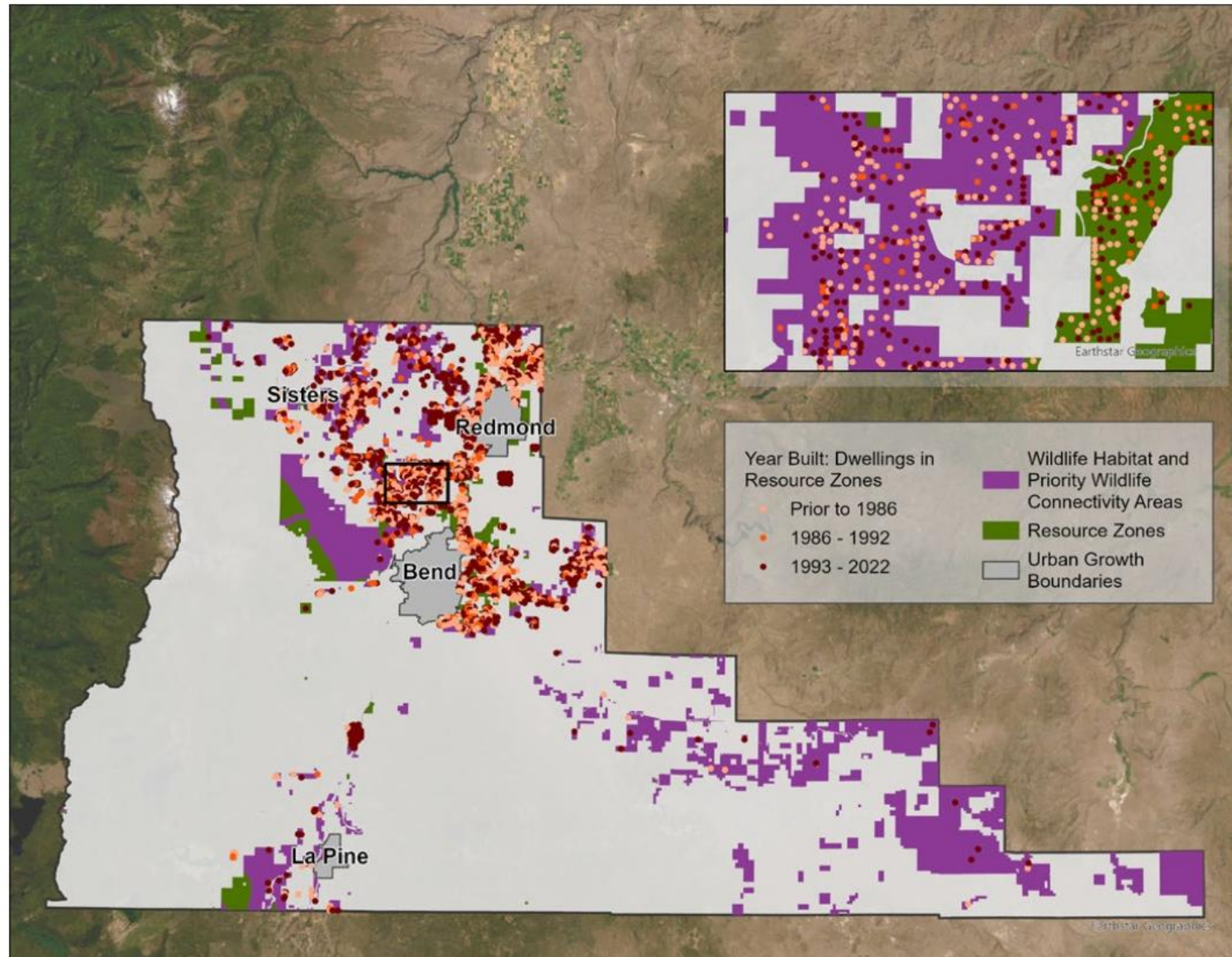
More houses in the forests means more forest fires and more lives and property at risk.



More rural homes means more competition for limited water.



More rural homes harm wildlife.



More rural homes means more long-distance driving, generating more climate-changing pollution.



Office of
ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RENEWABLE ENERGY

Rural versus Urban VMT by State, 2013

STATE	RURAL VMT SHARE	URBAN VMT SHARE	MILLION VMT
Oregon	44.5%	55.5%	33,706

More rural homes means loss of carbon sequestration potential.



Natural & Working Lands Proposal
2021

More rural homes means higher taxes.

Infrastructure and services for dispersed rural development costs more, per taxpayer, to build, maintain and operate.



The Committee may be interested to learn about successful, efforts to increase more affordable housing inside urban growth boundaries.

Portland sees significant production in middle housing resulting from recently adopted zoning changes

News Article



Several years after the Residential Infill Project (Parts 1 and 2) went into effect, middle housing permitting has increased significantly and has resulted in more affordable homeownership opportunities.

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Please do not give further consideration to HB 2400.

Thank you for your public service.