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To

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

Dear Committee,

Date: February, 9, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2400, HB 2422, and HB 2316. I am Steve Rouse, President of Rogue Advocates. We are a grassroots group monitoring land use, advocating for smart, compact, and climate-friendly urban development, and defending sustainable agriculture and open lands in Jackson and Josephine Counties. Rogue Advocates is an affiliate of 1000 Friends of Oregon.

Rogue Advocates opposes HB 2400, HB 2422, and HB 2316. These bills would set a dangerous precedent, undermining the successful and long-established land-use laws that have made Oregon a model for the nation. While we share the Committee's concern with the critical housing shortage in Oregon, the solutions to that crisis lie inside our cities and towns, not in promoting sprawl and converting valuable agriculture and resource land to low-density developments that impose heavy infrastructure costs and increase the threat of wildfire.

HB 2400 would allow an additional house on every rural property, potentially doubling Oregon's rural residential density and fragmenting our agricultural and forest lands. It would encourage short-term resale of those houses, resulting in residents with no connection to the property. These bills would inevitably increase traffic on farm roads, stress limited water resources, lead to conflicts with farming and forestry practices, and increase wildfire risk.

Rural property owners who want or need an extra home on their property already have many mechanisms to secure such a home, including seven different ways on farmland and six 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.



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HB 2422 would allow counties to bypass Oregon's land-use laws with case-by-case rezoning of certain rural lands. Rogue Advocates is a passionate defender of Oregon's land-use planning process, which has built-in safeguards to encourage development where it is less costly, where sufficient infrastructure exists, where people have access to equitable transportation options, and where agricultural and forestry operations won't be impacted. HB 2422 would gut those safeguards, allowing counties to sidestep analysis needed to prevent unintended negative consequences. Sadly, years of experience has proven that counties are all too often eager to prioritize developers' interests over careful analysis.

HB 2316 would allow single, detached homes on Oregon state lands owned by ODOT, ODFW, and ODF that are outside (but close to) urban growth boundaries. This undercuts the urban growth boundary principle, a foundation of Oregon's system to prevent the sprawl that plagues so many other states. It would also require the state to pay all infrastructure development costs – roads, water, and more – placing a heavy burden on the state before housing is built. A far better and more cost-effective approach is to place a priority on identifying surplus public lands inside UGBs for housing development – promoting walkable neighborhoods and thriving communities.

In conclusion, we reiterate that Rogue Advocates shares the Committee's desire to work for solutions to Oregon's housing crisis. Those solutions lie in promoting affordable housing within our existing urban growth boundaries and not allowing sprawl to consume irreplaceable agricultural and resource lands.

Thank you for allowing this opportunity for public input and considering these comments from Rogue Advocates.

Sincerely
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