

February 28, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development  
Oregon Legislature

RE: Opposing SB 878

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

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing over 6500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

OFB respectfully submits this testimony in opposition to SB 878, which allows rural homeowners to build an additional dwelling unit for a family member on land outside an urban growth boundary. While we understand the intent to provide housing flexibility, this bill conflicts with Oregon's land use policies and undermines protections for Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zones—threatening the long-term viability of agricultural operations.

Oregon's land use system was designed to protect farmland through the prevention of non-agricultural development in EFU zones. Generally, OFB opposes non-farm dwellings in EFU zones, as such developments contribute to land use conflicts, increase regulatory burdens on farmers, and encourage further fragmentation of agricultural lands. SB 878 does not require that the additional dwelling be tied to agricultural activities, contradicting the core purpose of EFU zoning.

By allowing additional residential development in rural areas without an agricultural purpose, SB 878 would increase the likelihood of conflicts between farmers and non-farming residents over standard farming practices. It would place additional strain on rural infrastructure, water resources, and emergency services that are already stretched thin in agricultural areas. It would also set a precedent for further non-farm development in EFU zones, weakening farmland protections over time.

OFB remains committed to protecting farmland for future generations of farmers and ranchers. While we support housing solutions that work within Oregon's land use framework, SB 878 fails to ensure that additional dwellings contribute to agricultural operations and protect EFU zones from non-farm development. For these reasons, Oregon Farm Bureau opposes SB 878 and urges the Legislature to reject this proposal in favor of policies that preserve farmland and protect the integrity of Oregon's agricultural economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Krabill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan J. Krabill  
Oregon Farm Bureau