

Ag for Oregon

Land for Tomorrow

Feb 28, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development

From: Mike McCarthy, President Ag for Oregon

Re: SB 438 and SB 878

Chair Pham and Committee Members:

I am a first generation commercial farmer in Parkdale. I make all of my living farming, raising apples, pears, cherries and some other crops. I have been involved with the Oregon Land Use program for 44 years. Without this program there would be very little farmland left in Hood River County and the fruit industry would have been lost to residential and resort development.

Please oppose SB 438 and SB 878. Scattering housing all across Oregon's farm and forest lands is not the answer to the housing problem. We have to stop this War on Oregon's farm and forest lands.

There are numerous issues I hope you will consider:

1. There are currently 7 ways to site a dwelling on farm land and 6 ways on forest land. That is more than enough!
2. More homes on farm land with septic fields, garages, driveway and parking areas cover up good farm land and chop up farms into smaller fields that can no longer be farmed efficiently or profitably.
3. These homes may be for family members but can and will be sold off to non farm members. This is just a real estate scheme.
4. These additional dwellings, particularly if they have non farming owners will create conflicts and costs for neighboring farmers.
5. On forest lands, these new homes result in serious trespass issues to surrounding forest land owners.
6. In many areas of the state, farm land parcels are already too small to be commercially farmed.
7. Adding additional houses on farm or forest land will increase the future costs to young people wanting to farm. In cases these new homes can double the price of a farm, making them unaffordable to actually farm, so only available to elite non farmers.
8. In many areas of the state the wells needed will severely tax already limited ground water.

This War on Oregon's farm and forest land is not the answer to the housing problem.

Please oppose SB 438 and SB 878.
Stop the war against conservation.

Mike McCarthy