

Submitter: Nancy Hildebrandt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB77

I STRONGLY oppose this bill.

96% of all privately owned rural land (land outside UGB's) in Oregon is zoned for farm, forest or mixed farm/forest use. When you drive through rural parts of Oregon you pass one after another small homestead or farm. I myself own one of those small farms and feel lucky to have the chance to steward my small acreage.

Unfortunately, the majority of small farms and private forests do not produce a survival income. Even the primary earner in the family often has an outside job to make ends meet. Other family members might want to help out with income-generating activities such as a home-based business.

The concept of agrotourism has also become popular, because it's considered a good way to keep small farms from going under. Allowing farm stays or holding farms or forest tours and events not only can make the difference in a farm's ability to survive, it plays another valuable role in helping urban visitors see up close what farming or forest management entails.

In short, your bill makes the economic survival of farmers and foresters more difficult.

Oregon is not losing farmland. It's losing farmers. I myself know a number of people who have given up their farm- or forestry-related occupations and left the state. With the huge increase in interest in local food and local products, it seems to me you should be doing everything you can to help farmers pursue their primary interest in farming or forestry and cobble together whatever supplemental income they need, not put even further restrictions on what occupations they can engage in.