

Submitter: Brenda Smola-Foti
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB788

Dear Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 77, which would impose new and unnecessary restrictions on home-based businesses in rural Oregon. This bill unfairly limits the ability of small business owners—especially those in farm and forest communities—to earn a living and support their local economies.

Rural Oregon depends on diversified income streams. Many farmers and rural residents operate home-based businesses to supplement their income, adapt to economic challenges, and remain financially sustainable. These businesses are not just economic lifelines for individual families—they are the backbone of our rural communities, fostering local commerce, creating jobs, and strengthening connections between neighbors. The proposed restrictions on the types of businesses allowed, how they advertise, and the number of customers they can serve would drastically undermine both individual livelihoods and the broader rural economy.

Additionally, SB 77 applies not only to farm and forest land but also to businesses inside urban growth boundaries. This overreach would stifle entrepreneurship across the state, making it harder for small businesses to thrive, particularly in areas where traditional job opportunities are limited. The existing home occupation statutes already provide guidelines—rewriting them to impose vague, confusing, and likely unenforceable restrictions only creates more bureaucracy without solving any real problem.

Beyond the economic impact, restricting rural businesses erodes the social fabric of our communities. Rural entrepreneurs provide essential goods and services that may not otherwise exist locally. They help keep small towns viable, create gathering places for residents, and contribute to the culture and identity of Oregon's rural regions. Limiting these businesses means limiting community resilience, reducing opportunities for young people to stay and work in their hometowns, and weakening the very networks that make rural life possible.

Rather than burdening rural business owners with restrictive and unnecessary regulations, I urge you to support policies that encourage small business growth, economic resilience, and community sustainability. These businesses are vital to our towns and local economies, providing jobs, services, and local products that benefit both residents and the broader state.

I respectfully ask that you oppose SB 77 and instead advocate for policies that empower rural entrepreneurs rather than restricting them. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Brenda Smola-Foti
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Carlton, OR