



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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March 7, 2025

Chair Senator Jeff Golden

Vice-Chair Senator Todd Nash

Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 78

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 78. At a time when Oregon faces a severe housing crisis, this bill imposes additional and unnecessary restrictions on housing development, disproportionately harming rural Oregonians, punishing wildfire victims, and further exacerbating the challenges our communities face.

SB 78 limits the size of replacement homes on forest and farmlands, restricting homeowners from rebuilding in a manner that meets their needs. While I understand the importance of responsible land use planning, this bill places unnecessary constraints on property owners, particularly those in rural areas who rely on flexibility to maintain and improve their homes. Many of these families have lived on their land for generations and limiting their ability to replace homes to a set square footage, without regard for family size, property use, or modern housing needs, creates undue hardship.

Oregon is already struggling to provide enough housing, and additional restrictions on replacement dwellings only add to the problem. Instead of creating more barriers, the state should focus on increasing housing availability, particularly in rural areas where workforce and family housing are already in short supply. Limiting home sizes does not solve wildfire risk or land-use concerns but instead punishes rural Oregonians who are trying to maintain safe and livable homes.

I urge the committee to oppose SB 78 and instead support policies that promote housing stability and affordability for all Oregonians. Thank you for your consideration. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss how we can work together to address housing challenges without imposing additional burdens on our rural communities.

Sincerely,

Mary Starrett

Commissioner