

Ag for Oregon

Land for Tomorrow

March 6, 2025

To: Senate Committee Natural Resources and Wildfire
From: Mike McCarthy, President Ag for Oregon
Re: SB 788
Chair Golden and Committee Members:

**Please Oppose SB 788. We have to stop this War on Oregon's farm and forest lands.
Check the facts. These uses are already allowed.**

What SB 788 does do? It allows Weddings and event venues that are already allowed uses.

What does SB 788 not do? It does not have any protections built in to protect the community and neighboring farms and ranches. A total end run around Goal 3 Land protections for farming or ranching.

I am a first generation commercial farmer in Parkdale. I make all of my living farming, raising apples, pears, cherries and managing forests. I have been involved in supporting conservation of farm and forest land in Oregon for 44 years. I represent Ag for Oregon, a group of farmers, ranchers and forest land owners who believe in strong protections for our working lands.

Without the Oregon Land Use program there would be little farmland left in Hood River County. The fruit industry would have been lost to residential and resort development. Please remember that the anti land use groups supported subdividing 10,000 acres of the Hood River Valley orchard lands as well as much of the Willamette Valley. They will not quit until they have achieved this.

The whole intent of the Oregon Land Use System proposed by a farmer, Hector MacPherson was to keep farm land prices low so the land would remain in farm use. Limiting non farm uses was the essential tool. Now, over time every possible non farm and non forest use has been allowed escalating land prices and moving commercial uses out of our rural communities on to farm and forest land.

Please oppose SB 788.

Do not mandate more uses on farm and ranch land without full protections for neighboring farms and ranches by ORS 215.296.

Mike McCarthy