

March 28, 2025

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness
Oregon Legislature

RE: Concerns with HB 2316 and Amendments

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and Members of the
Committee:

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing over 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech. My name is Ryan Krabill, and on behalf of OFB, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Oregon's land use system has long sought to balance the need for housing with the protection of our agricultural lands. We recognize the importance of addressing housing shortages but believe this must be done in a way that does not undermine the state's agricultural foundation.

For this reason, we **strongly oppose HB 2316 and the -1 amendment**. These proposals would allow for the conversion of agricultural and public lands to housing without the necessary planning and oversight, significantly weakening protections for farmland. During the bill's hearing on Wednesday, March 26, it was made clear that the bill had been changed considerably to be limited to lands within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). We appreciate the affirmative statement, but harbor continued concerns about the base bill and -1 amendment that is slated for a work session on Wednesday, April 2. It is worth noting that the -2 amendment is absent from the work session agenda at this time.

We acknowledge that the **-2 amendment improves the bill** by restricting development to lands inside UGBs. However, several concerns remain, particularly regarding local control over land use decisions, the removal of key planning tools, and the potential for state-owned lands with agricultural value to be repurposed for housing.

1. Erosion of Local Land Use Authority

The -2 amendment still limits the role of local governments in deciding how and where housing is developed. Home Start Lands would be automatically considered suitable for residential use unless a local government can prove otherwise based on narrow criteria. This places communities in a reactive position, rather than allowing them to guide growth in a way that fits their long-term plans.

Oregon's land use system has functioned because it allows for thoughtful, community-driven planning. Removing that local oversight creates uncertainty, particularly for agricultural operations near newly designated development areas.

2. Fast-Tracking Development Without Adequate Review

The bill significantly streamlines the approval process for housing on Home Start Lands. It eliminates zoning changes and conditional use permits, which are important tools for ensuring that new development is compatible with existing land uses.

Without these safeguards, there is a greater risk of conflicts between new residents and working farms. Agriculture comes with noise, dust, and other realities of farm life that may not be well understood by those moving into newly developed areas. A well-planned approach that considers infrastructure capacity and land use compatibility is essential to prevent long-term challenges for both farmers and homeowners.

3. Unclear Protections for Public Lands with Agricultural Value

HB 2316-2 still allows state-owned lands to be sold, transferred, or leased for housing development, including through long-term leases of up to 99 years. While some of these lands may be appropriate for housing, there is no clear protection ensuring that high-value farmland or productive rangelands are excluded from these transactions.

Public lands play an important role in supporting Oregon's agricultural economy, and their long-term use should be carefully considered. If these lands are repurposed for housing, it is critical to ensure that agricultural and natural resource values are not lost in the process.

Conclusion

While the -2 amendment is an improvement over the original bill, it does not fully address the concerns of the agricultural community. We encourage the Legislature to take a more balanced approach—one that prioritizes housing solutions within existing urban areas, maintains strong local planning authority, and protects Oregon's agricultural lands for future generations.

For these reasons, in their current form, OFB respectfully urges a **NO vote on HB 2316 and the -1 and -2 amendments.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Krabill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan J. Krabill
Oregon Farm Bureau