

Submitter: Walt Mintkeski

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3928

As an Oregonian since 1972 who supported SB 100 and the establishment of our urban growth boundaries, I strongly oppose HB 3928. This bill would authorize counties to create random and haphazard housing developments on land outside urban growth boundaries, including on lands zoned for agricultural and forest use. The bill creates incentives for developers to purchase agricultural land, take it out of production, and build sprawling and inefficient low-density subdivisions in the middle of agricultural and forest land. which will negatively affect our essential agricultural and forestry lands and the communities that rely on them, without taking any meaningful steps to address Oregon's shortage of affordable, accessible housing inside connected communities. This bill is attempt to skyrocket the price of agricultural and forestry acreage statewide, so that luxury developers can profit from the speculative pricing – and meanwhile, our working lands stewards and the many Oregonians who rely on them lose out.

HB 3928's focus on developing single, detached homes on lands outside UGBs places housing farther from the things people need, and does not provide the type of affordable, connected housing needed to accommodate Oregon's housing demand. It also introduces residential development in the middle of large blocks of land designated for agricultural and forest production, which increases conflicts with common farming and forestry practices, increases traffic on farm roads, creates additional demand on limited water resources, and can increase wildfire risk. The mere opportunity for additional residential development drives up land prices beyond what farmers, ranchers, and forest land managers can afford.

New housing unrelated to agricultural and forest production is better directed inside cities and towns, near the schools, stores, and services Oregonians need. We have thousands of vacant acres inside our UGBs that are suitable for housing but simply need an extension of a road or some pipes. This is where we should focus investments and policy changes to provide housing – not on remote, expensive-to-serve lands in and among our agricultural and forest lands.

I urge you to vote no on HB 3928.