

Submitter: Pat Dudley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB78

March 6, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire, Senator Golden Chair
Re: SB 77 and SB 78

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire, thank you for the opportunity to express my support for SB 78 and SB 77.

My name is Pat Dudley. My family has been farming wine grapes in Polk County for 47 years. We currently farm 80 acres of wine grapes and produce 13,000 cases of wine annually at our estate winery. When we purchased our property in 1978, we learned that it had been previously platted as a residential subdivision of 5-acre parcels. It was barely saved for farming by the passage of Senate Bill 100 just a few years before we arrived here.

Two generations of our family are currently active in our business, with a succession plan in place for our third generation. I am here today because we believe nothing is more essential to the success of our future generations than the continuing strength of our land use laws.

Protection of our farmland from commercial and residential development has allowed aspiring winegrowers without a huge fortune behind them to purchase land, establish vineyards, and make world class wines on hillsides that were once considered marginal for farming. We need to make sure this can continue.

We have also seen how our farmland protection laws have promoted a remarkable renaissance in many small towns in our region, with flourishing restaurants, lodging and other tourist amenities, as well as restoration of public infrastructure financed by growing prosperity from tourism dollars. These developments would not be happening if restaurants and hotels and entertainment facilities were permitted on agricultural land as they have been in California wine country.

We know that one of the primary attractions for tourists coming to our wine country is that we have so far resisted "Napaification." We hear it all the time. They appreciate that things look different here. We need to keep it that way.

But as you know, there are constant pressures to chip away at farmland protections and allow more commercial and residential development in EFU zones in the interest of short-term financial opportunities. That is why we need these two bills, to close some loopholes in the original rules that have already allowed too much erosion of our valuable farmland.

SB 78 Stops the conversion of agricultural and forest land for luxury residential development through “replacement” dwellings that take land out of production and drive up the price of nearby agricultural and forest land.

SB 77 Closes the loophole in the Home Occupation rule that allows large-scale high-end hospitality and entertainment facilities being approved on land designated for agricultural and timber production.

Chair Golden and members of the committee, Please vote to move these two bills forward.

Thank you
Pat Dudley