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May 10, 2021

Rep. Julie Fahey, Chair  
Committee Members  
House Committee on Housing  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 391 (Accessory Dwelling Units- Rural Residential Lands)

Dear Chair Fahey and Committee Members:

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 40 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

SB 391 allows counties to authorize construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on rural residential lands under certain conditions. In advance of the 2019 legislative session, Sen. Dembrow put together a broad work group to see whether appropriate conditions could be agreed to that would allow some ADUs on rural residential lands. Topics for conditions included septic systems, wildfire risk, siting considerations, size, and more. Sen. Dembrow crafted a bill for the February 2020 session based on that input, reflected in the bill before you today.

1000 Friends has focused on two issues. First, appropriately incorporating wildfire risk, which is now in the bill, in Section 2(1) (j), (k), (L), and (m). Second, ensuring these ADUs are not used as vacation rentals. Short-term rental use poses two challenges: it increases the transitory population of those not accustomed to farming practices in farm areas, which we have seen poses conflicts and problems for farmers and increases wildfire risk, and it removes potential long-term rentals from the housing market that could be used for local workers. This has been addressed in Section 2(3).

We really appreciate Sen. Dembrow's efforts to bring together all the issues and stakeholders to shape this bill.

Thank you,

Mary Kyle McCurdy  
Deputy Director