

Submitter: Andreas von Flotow
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB78

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 77 and SB 78. I urge you to oppose these bills. I am an Oregonian who opposes SB 77 and SB 78, which will negatively affect agricultural and forest lands by cementing rural gentrification and displacement that are turning essential working lands that feed our communities and supply our timber into backdrops for luxury estates and hotels. Family farmers, ranchers, and timberland managers – and especially new and beginning operators – are being priced out by rising housing costs. The government should be making housing easier to build for our laborers, not harder!

These bills would help entrench long-abused loopholes that are bad for rural residents, rural economies, and our state as a whole. SB 77 worsens the problem of speculative land pricing through abuse of the “home occupations” statute, where luxury hotels, and well-heeled entertainment venues on land designated exclusively for agricultural and forest production are driving up farm and forest land prices beyond the reach of family farmers, ranchers, and timberland managers. Housing should be encouraged on all forest and agriculture lands to lower the speculative value of the few lands which are now permitted to host dwellings, thereby creating much needed houses for farm and forest workers.

SB 78 makes worse a similar issue of speculative land pricing for high-end residential development, introducing additional misuse of “replacement dwelling” provisions, while ruining the ability for homeowners in farm and forest zones to replace a home lost to natural disaster or decay. This encourages the conversion of thousands of acres of resource land into sparsely-spaced elite residences at the expense of working farmers and timberland managers who have no remaining houses available.

It’s time for the legislature to again pay serious attention to Oregon’s farm, range, and forest land. The longer we ignore these issues, the more we do irreparable damage to Oregon’s precious resource lands and the families that work hard to feed our communities. Once we lose these lands, we can never go back. Oregon’s farmers, ranchers, and timberland managers deserve better.

Please stop the land speculation and conversion of Oregon’s limited agricultural and

forest land to millionaire dwellings by opposing these two bills. Thank you for considering my comments and allowing this opportunity for public input.