



March 31, 2025

Chair Marsh and Committee Members
House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Re: Opposition to HB 3928

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by providing technical services and supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers, and with federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

Protection of farm and forest land under the Department of Land Conservation and Development's longstanding Land Use Goals 3 and 4 is critical to maintaining the agriculture and forestry land base upon which our natural resource-based industries and conservation efforts rely. HB 3928 would erode those longstanding goals.

HB 3928 would create random developments through spot zoning outside the urban growth boundaries, including upon lands that are under farm and forest protection. The bill bypasses the process for counties to plan for additional rural development through the existing exceptions process or the provisions of ORS 215.788-794. Those provisions ensure increased densities will not have unintended negative consequences on resource lands.

Encouraging landowners to stop production on resource lands that support our communities' economics and then transfer the property to land developers is not a prescription for accommodating affordable housing. The provision in this bill regarding required farm or forest production within 3 of the last 5 years is a devastating loophole. This language would allow an individual or company to buy a productive farm and then let it go idle for a few years to raise its priority for development.

We urge the committee to vote no on HB 3928 so that we can protect our farm and forest land resources and minimize conflict between production and development. That will encourage counties to use the existing land use laws to accommodate change with due process.

Jan Lee
Jan Lee, President
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts