

March 5, 2025

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

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on **SB77** and **SB78**. I encourage you to support these common-sense bills and move them forward.

I am a fourth-generation farmer and lifelong resident in Douglas County. My husband and I have been farming together for over 50 years. We currently raise wine grapes, sheep, and timber. I am a firm believer that land use laws have significantly contributed to retaining our ability to farm.

Two of our children would like to carry on with farming, but to be successful they like many other farmers will have to invest in more land. Even with our help they are being priced out by rising land costs caused in part by the constant pressure of other uses on farmland. It is hard to find a farmable parcel without a dwelling and those dwellings are becoming more and more expensive. Even if a farmer can swing the financing of property with a house, most farmers do not have the time or the desire to be landlords.

**SB77** brings home occupation standards back to the original intent of allowing a small modest business within a farm dwelling by the occupant of the home. Without this bill, non-farm businesses, some commercial in nature, owned by those that may or may not live on the property, will impact and complicate nearby farming in the area making it harder for existing and future legitimate farmers.

**SB78** works on the abused replacement dwelling statute. The replacement dwellings standards were originally put into place for damaged or beyond repair houses, but currently there is nothing to prevent the demolition of perfectly good homes to build much bigger expensive new dwellings often not related to a farming business. This practice contributes to the overall rise in agricultural land values hindering current and future farmers from acquiring land to farm.

Please help current and future generations by protecting the limited amount of land available for farming and ranching by supporting SB77 and SB78.

Thank you,

*Shelley Wetherell*

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