



Locally Grown
and
GROWING STRONG

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery
OFB Testimony in Support of HB 2289A
May 10, 2021

Chair Golden, members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of HB 2289A. By way of background the Oregon Farm Bureau is the state's largest agricultural trade association, representing nearly 7,000 farm and ranch families from across the state.

Whether it is through their careers, volunteer efforts, or responsibilities as rural landowners, Oregon's farmers and ranchers frequently interact with fire on the landscape. This year especially, Oregon's rural communities were severely impacted by devastating wildfires. During the historic Labor Day fires, Oregon's farmers and ranchers were on the front lines in their communities, evacuating and caring for their employees, neighbors, animals, and friends who were in danger. Those who lost homes across the state were largely members of the agricultural community, including over a hundred agricultural employees whose homes were decimated by the Almeda Fire.

Unfortunately, almost a year since the Labor Day fires, Oregonians are still reeling from losing their homes and businesses. We need the legislature to step in and ensure that Oregonians will be able to swiftly rebuild their homes and commercial venues without our land use planning system causing additional strife. The land use system was put in place to ensure that Oregon expands responsibly, and that our communities are planned in a way that maximizes benefit for our citizens, and minimizes adverse impacts. It was not intended to prevent individuals from rebuilding their homes and lives after suffering immense tragedy.

For these reasons, OFB supports HB 2289A, which will establish a process for the restoration and replacement of dwellings or certain uses affected by the 2020 wildfires, while still providing necessary sideboards to ensure that unnecessary loopholes are not created in our planning system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Samantha Bayer
Policy Counsel
Oregon Farm Bureau
samantha@oregonfb.org