

Submitter: Robert Emmons
On Behalf Of: LandWatch Lane County
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB77

Chair Golden and Members of the Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee:

Please accept the following comments on my own behalf and on behalf of LandWatch Lane County, the 501(c)3 non-profit I head. LandWatch has worked for almost 30 years with neighbors throughout Lane County to protect farm and forest land, natural areas and open spaces.

When I came from the deep south in 1965, I was in awe of the natural beauty and character of this state. And I was amazed and grateful to learn that efforts were underway to protect the qualities responsible for my appreciation and sorely missing in the states I'd left behind. I was even more amazed to learn that that work was led by a Republican governor and other advocates who not only shared my zeal but were busy building a base for the legislation that resulted in SB 100.

For over 50 years SB 100 has been critical to the protection of Oregon's farm and forest land economy and served as an unprecedented model for the nation against urbanizing developments on rural lands. Unfortunately, among other incursions, in those years we've seen an extraordinary proliferation of unrelated and irrelevant uses permitted in farm and forest zones that have driven prices up and kept farmers and foresters out.

The bills before you would help curb this epidemic:

SB 77 honors the intent of the home occupation statute to keep home occupations in-home as secondary to the primary occupation and activities in farm and forest zones. SB 78 requires that a replacement dwelling be of the same size and scale of the dwelling it is replacing instead of merely an opportunity to build an inappropriate and out-of-scale non-farm residence.

These modest proposals would provide some reasonable and overdue protections for our vulnerable rural lands, and we ask for your support. Thanks for your hearing on these bills and for the opportunity to address them.

Robert Emmons, President

LandWatch Lane County