

Submitter: joan thompson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2422

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and Committee members,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on HB 2400, HB 2422, and HB2316, all three of which I urge you to vote against. These bills are an attempt to subvert protections for some of Oregon's most precious resources under the cynical guise of addressing homelessness. None of these bills would actually help the unhoused in Oregon but, instead, would enable the degradation of an invaluable resource, productive agricultural land. HB 2400 is an attempt to increase housing on agricultural land that would in no way support agriculture. Taken together with HB 2422, which would bypass land use laws to increase density in some rural areas, and - most egregiously - HB 2316, which would allow sprawl to spill out on public lands, while forcing the public to pay for it, this measure is an assault on one of the most significant attributes of the state, which is its beautiful rural land.

Agriculture is not only the second leading industry in Oregon that brings significant income to rural Oregonians; it is also an essential component of Oregon's character and supports Oregon's reputation as uniquely beautiful and environmentally healthy state.

My spouse and I moved to Oregon after living in Austin and Boston for years. Those cities provide excellent professional opportunities and better salaries but we were drawn to Oregon for the quality of life here. Having lived in other major urban areas, we could clearly see the benefits of Oregon's system of urban growth boundaries. Concentrating resources in urban areas makes even more sense in terms of supporting the unhoused population.

In conclusion, these bills would simple divert resources away from efforts to help the most vulnerable in our communities. To successful address the homelessness crisis, new housing must be developed in areas that already provide supportive services and resources. These bills do nothing to address the needs of our houseless neighbors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment,

Joan Thompson