

Submitter: Carrie Thomas
On Behalf Of: Myself and Thrive Hood River
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB78

Dear Chair Golden and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

I am writing to you as a Christmas tree farmer, resident of Hood River County, and Thrive Hood River Board member. I am proud that our state has a forward thinking Land Use System that protects our farmland and forest land with special designations meant to keep these lands preserved for agricultural and forest use. My work with Thrive Hood River includes that I read every planning permit that is submitted to the county. The trend I see in permit applications for replacement dwellings on land designated for farm or forest production is for outsize houses, sometimes including pools with pool houses or detached garages with "office space" that are clearly self contained apartments rather than offices. These mansions are not being built by farmers who want to work the land, but by folks wealthy enough to buy an EFU or forest plot with no intention of farm or forest production. This trend has made the price of farmland unaffordable for farmers. I would not be able to afford my own property if I were starting over today. SB 78 will stop the conversion of farm and forest lands into luxury residential development.

Please help keep our farmland affordable for farmers and our forest lands working for future generations of Oregonians by passing SB 78.

Thank you for your committee work on behalf of Oregonians and thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important bill.

Regards,
Carrie Thomas