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February 4, 2021

Rep. Julie Fahey, Chair
Committee Members
House Committee on Housing
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2778 – “Historic” houses as ADUs on Rural Residential Lands

Dear Chair Fahey and Committee Members:

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 40 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

1000 Friends of Oregon opposes HB 2778. Legislation was passed in the 2017 session that was narrowly focused on creating a tool to encourage the preservation of historic farm dwellings on rural residential lots. It allowed the landowner to build a second house on the same lot, which otherwise would not have been allowed, in exchange for preserving the historic home. “Historic” was defined as a home built between 1850 and 1945. This was recognized as a narrow exception to the limit that otherwise exists because these are *rural* residential areas, usually located in areas surrounded by farm operations, on septic systems and wells, with farm-to-market roads, and sometimes in wildfire prone areas.

HB 2778 would extend that period to 1974, thereby removing the historic justification for this narrow exception and opening up thousands of parcels to additional homes, potentially doubling the number of homes in these rural areas. This is contrary to the delicate agreement reached for this narrow exception.

We urge you to recognize the intent and therefore the agreement behind the original bill, and not pass HB 2773. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Mary Kyle McCurdy

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director