

Submitter: Sarah Deumling
On Behalf Of: Zena Forest Products
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or SB77
Topic:
Chair Golden and Members of the Committee

My name is Sarah Deumling and with my family I own and manage the 1300 acre Zena Forest in the Eola Hills west of Salem - the largest continuous remaining forest in the Willamette Valley. We are a working forest with two primary goals: #1, to leave the healthiest, most resilient forest ecosystem possible for future generation and #2, to make a living.

Since the 1980s the number of houses along our 5 mile stretch of rural road in Polk county has nearly doubled with very few of them engaged in any primary way with farming or forestry. Up above along the top of the hills McMansions on view property have proliferated in our GROUNDWATER LIMITED AREA. The new wells are ever deeper as the water table goes down, causing negative consequences for #1, folks with the older wells, #2 our shallow rooted Douglas Fir trees and #3, the farmers on the valley floor to the west of the hills whose summer water flows off those (forest protected) hills.

For decades those of us who worry/care about protecting our farm and forest lands have (usually unsuccessfully) played defense at the legislature. The two bills (SB 77 & SB 78) represent a small but determined attempt to reign in the decades long proliferation of the dilution of our land use laws - more than a tenfold increase in the number of allowed non-farm uses on EFU land.

Our natural resource based economies are the bedrock insurance policy for Oregon in many ways. They cannot up and move to another state offering more lucrative tax breaks, forest do not need additional water while protecting and conserving the water we have. If managed well, both agriculture and forestry are forever renewable.

McMansions are for the few, food and wood products are for everyone. I urge you to move these two small but important bills forward.

Example #1 re: gentrification of land cost. In 2003 I purchased a 35 acre parcel of forestland in the midst of the McMansions for \$108,000. In the fall of 2024 I had it appraised for \$600,000 - still no house or other amenities on it.

Example #2 re: water. For many years we managed a 160 acre parcel of mixed, mature forest on the west slopes of the Eola Hills (not contiguous but very nearby). On that

property were two fantastic spring fed creeks, thus our name of "Little Metolius" for the property. When it was sold it was immediately clearcut, stumps removed and partially converted to vineyard and an event center/tasting room, etc. Springs tend to dry up under such circumstances.

Example # 3 re: Cumulative Impact. Since the outset our land use laws have required a consideration of "cumulative impact" on the surround agricultural and forestry activities for conditional use applications which is a good idea but doesn't work. The first (name your use) that is approved has little impact. By #5 is there still no significant impact? How about #10? Once started down this path there is no going back as a precedent that these activities are OK has been set. We must figure out ways to stop this proliferation if we want to continue to protect our natural resource land, water, habitat, biodiversity, soil, etc. for future generations.

And finally our rural towns would welcome most of the non-farm use enterprises into their UGBs. This would bring much needed business and life into places with the existing infrastructure already in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sarah Deumling