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February 20, 2023

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

***Re: Testimony in opposition to HB 2192***

Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Hartman and Owens, and members of the committee,

Central Oregon LandWatch (“LandWatch”) is a conservation organization that, for more than 35 years, has protected Central Oregon’s forests and high desert, rivers and springs, fish and wildlife, and its vibrant communities. We work to conserve the region’s ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and working rural lands balanced with a responsible, sustainable approach to planning and fostering thriving communities.

Central Oregon LandWatch opposes HB 2192. The bill would make it easier to build “replacement dwellings” on forest lands protected by statewide land use planning Goal 4 throughout the state. Goal 4 is

“To conserve forest lands by maintaining the forest land base and to protect the state's forest economy by making possible economically efficient forest practices that assure the continuous growing and harvesting of forest tree species as the leading use on forest land consistent with sound management of soil, air, water, and fish and wildlife resources and to provide for recreational opportunities and agriculture.”

The Goal’s aims are to conserve forest lands for growing trees; sound management of soil, air, water, and fish and wildlife; and provision of recreation and agriculture. Residential housing is not among that list. Forestland owners have existing opportunities to build forest dwellings, including lot of record dwellings, ORS 215.705, large tract dwellings, ORS 215.740, template dwellings, ORS 215.750, accessory dwellings, ORS 215.757, and already-permitted replacement dwellings. ORS 215.755. Additional opportunities to build residential housing in forest zones are not needed, and in fact are counterproductive to Goal 4. Additional housing creates additional fire risk, harms soil and fish and wildlife habitat, and results in greater transportation greenhouse gas emissions.

HB 2192 does not limit its harm to forest land resources. It also harms agricultural lands protected by statewide land use planning Goal 3. The bill, in Section 3, would remove a sunset provision from HB 3024 (2019) that gave agricultural land owners a time-limited opportunity to



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build additional replacement dwellings. That time-limited opportunity has passed and should not be extended indefinitely at the expense of our state's limited supply of agricultural lands.

On both forest lands and agricultural lands, the bill would allow the resurrection of zombie dwellings that have not existed for the last 50 years.

As other commenters have pointed out, agricultural lands require year-round tending to grow crops and raise livestock. Forest lands do not. For the sake of our state's one-of-a-kind forest resources, and minimizing statewide wildfire risk, please do not pass HB 2192.

Respectfully submitted,

Rory Isbell  
Staff Attorney & Rural Lands Program Manager  
Central Oregon LandWatch



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