

Submitter: Steven Freer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2400
Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Breese-Iverson, and Committee Members,

As a resident of Deschutes county, I am asking you to oppose HB 2400.

Allowing second dwellings in exclusive farm use and forest zones under the terms of this bill would threaten Oregon's farmland, puts intense pressure on our groundwater, and add to our wildfire risk. I am not inherently opposed to second dwellings for family/relatives on single occupancy parcels, however, this bill is insufficiently discerning. There is no minimum lot size to limit the development. Section 2.(3) is particularly concerning to me. The 18 month provision for open tenancy between family use of such a dwelling is a loophole which allows - even encourages - open rentals and vacation rentals. Who would monitor such use of these dwellings and enforce the ordinance over thousands of dwellings in tens of thousands of square miles?

Please protect our farmlands and forests. Oregon's land use laws exist to keep these lands productive. HB 2400 , by allowing additional housing on these lands that does not support agriculture or forestry, would drive up land costs and make it harder for farmers and foresters to continue their work.

We are already facing critical water use issues in central and eastern Oregon. Pressure on ground water aquifers is extreme, and encouraging development reliant on wells and septic systems will further strain limited groundwater supplies and accelerate groundwater degradation in shallow aquifers.

In Central Oregon, our mule deer populations are plummeting due to habitat loss. Increasing development in sensitive areas would accelerate this crisis.

Finally, Oregon's rural lands are already at high wildfire risk, but fortunately Oregon's land use laws have put us a step ahead other states when it comes to mitigating our risk. Why would we exacerbate this risk? More homes mean more human-caused fires and more people in danger when fires occur, straining emergency services.

Please protect Oregon's rural lands and reject HB 2400. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Steven D. Freer
A citizen, voter, and taxpayer in Deschutes County, Oregon