Submitter: Jean Aguerre

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2400

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness:

Thank you for considering my plea to oppose HB 2400, HB 2422, and HB 2316, three bills that would weaken Oregon land use laws by opening the gate to development of thousands of dwellings and other buildings in forests, farms and public lands.

Development in rural areas harms our farms, forests, and communities while increasing costs to taxpayers. My long-held, 40-acre forest property is bordered by public and private lands and is severely impacted by the sort of development these bills would allow. Because the county does not enforce any land use laws, the bordering landowner has gotten away with constructing two extra (illegal) houses which have fragmented and destroyed longtime wildlife corridors and habitat. The extra dwellings raise the risk of fire - already high risk - to my property. On top of that the occupants used illegal irrigation that drained the small forest watershed. It will take decades for the watershed to replenish.

The neighboring public land holds a gulch stream-spring water source that provides ground and surface waters to this small forest watershed. If that public land were to be clearcut or developed, the increased fragmentation, herbicide use, and stress on natural forest carbon sequestration systems would also raise the risk of catastrophic fire at increased costs to taxpayers.

I have spent hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars fighting the impacts to my property and watershed to no avail. Even without illegal water use, every household uses water that our area simply does not have available to provide without serious environmental impacts and increased fire risk.

If HB 2400, HB 2422, or HB 2316 are passed my unfortunate experience will be repeated across the state. Please oppose these bills.

Respectfully,
Jean Aguerre