

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

From: Jim Gilbert – Owner, Northwoods Nursery

Subject: Please support Senate Bills 77 & 78

Dear Chair Golden and members of the Committee,

I have made my living growing nursery stock here in south Clackamas County for over 40 years. Agriculture is the second largest sector in Oregon's economy and a major factor in its continued success is our unique-in-the-nation land use planning program. I am very grateful to Governor Tom McCall and the other farsighted and dedicated legislators, farmers and concerned citizens who created this program that has protected our valuable agricultural land for over 50 years.

My nursery is located just 40 minutes south of Portland, and instead of being surrounded by strip malls and subdivisions, my neighbors raise cattle and grow blueberries, hazelnuts and vegetables.

During its entire existence, our land us planning program has been under attack. More and more non-farm uses have been permitted on farmland, eroding one of Oregon's most important natural resources. Home occupations, which were originally intended to be small and subordinate to the main uses of the land, have expanded and come in conflict with farming operations. Senate Bills 77 & 78 are important measures to help stem the tide of incompatible uses of our fertile and irreplaceable farm and ranch land. An example of what they will help correct is on the property of one of my neighbors. While not a farmer, he purchased 20 acres of farmland, turned 5 acre into a front lawn, constructed a very large and expensive house and opened a 6,000 Sq. ft. auto body shop, a "home occupation". This land will not be farmed again and it's fate is similar to other property in Oregon, where a wealthy person can purchase a piece of land with a normal, functional house and replace it with a very large and expensive dwelling thereby turning productive farmland into a private country estate.

Please honor Oregon's long legacy of farming and ranching and support passage of Senate Bills 77 and 78.

Thank you,

Jim Gilbert
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PS: Please go to www.anoregonstory.com to watch a documentary film I helped make, which tells the amazing story of how Governor Tom McCall and many other farsighted and dedicated Oregonians created our unique land-use planning program.