



## SAVE HELVETIA

13260 NW Bishop Rd  
Hillsboro, OR 97124  
February 25, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing and Development

### **Opposition to SB 438**

Save Helvetia is a private, non-profit, advocacy organization that has been active over 15 years to protect farm and forestlands in Washington County. We organized in 2010 during the Urban and Rural Reserves planning process, studying lands in and around the Helvetia area, submitting testimonies to Washington County, Metro, and LCDC. We then became appellants to the Oregon State Court of Appeals, prevailing in our citizen science assertions that the county and Metro had misapplied the law and administrative rules in selecting urban and rural reserves. The court's ruling invalidated the proposed reserves and the negotiated result became the Grand Bargain legislation (HB 4078) of 2014. This was unanimously endorsed by both houses of the legislature and signed into law by then Governor Kitzhaber. We have since become an affiliate of 1000 Friends of Oregon, monitoring and defending land use laws and principles in Washington County.

**We oppose HB 438** in that it seeks to override current land use laws by allowing a dwelling on any parcel outside of an urban growth boundary if there is already a house on the parcel. The new house would be for a relative but for only the first 18 months, after which it could be occupied by anyone. This would open the door to issues that would conflict with agriculture and forestry. Such a dwelling could become a short term rental or a VRBO, begetting events of various kinds. We have had experience with outlaw VRBOs where drivers, unfamiliar with the area, catch their tires on the gravel edges of our rural roads, flipping over. Speed limits are often exceeded creating hazards for farm machinery, especially during the summer harvest periods. On gravel roads, speeding traffic raises dust that blankets crops. Noxious weeds brought into grass seed growing areas can spoil crop purity. There have been occasions when urban users seek to use guns and/or hunt on farmlands. Model airplane enthusiasts have brought the threat of fire to croplands. Rural noise standards get violated. County enforcement in the rural areas is thin leading to interpersonal conflicts and personal attempts at enforcement.

Please do not add to conflicts in rural agricultural and forestry areas.

Respectfully,

Robert Bailey, Secretary  
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*Advancing policies, leaders and actions that  
protect Helvetia's treasured resources.*