

Submitter: Alicia Hudson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB438

Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 878 and 438. I wish to express a neutral stance on the bill as it is currently presented. While I recognize the importance of addressing the lack of available housing on rural properties and appreciate the intent behind SB 878 and SB 438, I believe there may be areas currently existing laws could be expanded to provide the most effective outcomes for Oregonians. As a land owner who is currently experiencing the costs and struggles related to building a primary dwelling of land zoned for forest use in Washington county, a broader dialogue with rural communities on realities of building additional dwellings is needed.

I would like the committee to investigate the existing roadblocks including the cost and stress associated with building dwellings on rural properties in Oregon under current regulations. Many property owners in rural areas are already facing significant financial strain and logistical challenges when it comes to constructing new homes or structures on their properties. I am one of these distressed property owners. The costs of permits, infrastructure development, and meeting state and local zoning requirements can be overwhelming, especially for small landowners or those who are not in a position to bear the financial burden such as young land owners. These factors often deter the creation of much-needed housing and exacerbate housing shortages in our rural communities.

In light of this, I encourage the committee to consider measures that would reduce these barriers, particularly for those who wish to build affordable homes in rural areas. This could include streamlining permitting processes, providing financial incentives, or offering technical assistance to those navigating the complex regulatory landscape. The cost and stress of building dwellings in rural properties should not be an obstacle to expanding housing options across Oregon.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the committee members and sponsors to consider expanding the provisions of Senate Bill 391, passed in 2021. SB 391, which aimed to allow placement of addition dwelling units (ADUs) on rural properties, has shown promise in addressing key issues within our state. However, this regulation as written, it is optional for counties to adopt these regulations. Washington county, for example, does not allow the placement of ADUs on rural properties. Additionally, the cost to place an ADU in permit fees is evaluated the same as if the dwelling was a primary dwelling which presents a significant cost

burden to landowners. Expanding the scope of this legislation could provide additional support and resources where they are most needed, offering an opportunity to build on the successes already achieved under SB 391.

Thank you for considering both SB 878 and the potential for expanding SB 391.

Sincerely,
Alicia Hudson