



Chair Pham, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Committee Members
Senate Committee on Housing and Development

**Re: Opposition to SB-1129,
Requires LCDC to amend its rules**

The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by providing technical services and supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers, and with federal, state, and nonprofit partners.

Protection of farm and forest land under the Department of Land Conservation and Development's longstanding Land Use Goals 3 and 4 is critical to maintaining the agriculture and forestry land base upon which our natural resource-based industries and conservation efforts rely. SB-1129 would significantly erode those longstanding goals established via Oregon's historic land use act of 1973.

SB-1129 would raise the priority for adding lands to urban reserves if those lands have "poor quality soils, limited water rights or minimal or no current or recent active farm use." While this proposal may appear reasonable at first glance, the bill would have serious and permanent impacts to important farmland for several reasons:

- Some of Oregon's best soils for specialty crops, such as wine grapes and cranberries, may be classified as "poor quality."
- Non-irrigated farmland across the state is highly productive for a great many crops, including wheat production that helps feed a hungry world.
- The provision regarding "recent active farm use" is a devastating loophole. This language would allow an individual or company to buy a productive farm and then let it go idle for a few years to raise its priority for addition to an urban reserve. Given the substantial profit margins of development compared to farming, this concern is not theoretical – it will most certainly happen.

In short, SB-1129 would short-circuit Oregon's historic land use planning process and result in permanent impacts to Oregon's farmers and farmland. We appreciate the legislature's serious attention to Oregon's farm, range and forest lands, as the longer we ignore these challenges, the more seriously these lands are irreparably impacted. If these lands are lost they cannot be replaced.

We urge you to vote "no" on SB-1129.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Lee".

Jan Lee, President
Oregon Association of Conservation Districts