

Submitter: Corinne Koopowitz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB77
Testimony for SB 77 and SB 78
Support and Move Forward

I, Corinne Koopowitz, ask the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire, and anyone else that is involved in the two bills and has the authority to approve or deny such measures, to approve both bills and to move forward. In doing this will put an end to those that think they can just make changes to land or zones because it will benefit them; they think it is ok to ask for exceptions to change the use of their land, their building, rather than complying with what they already have.

My husband and I moved to Oregon for all the right reasons, one of them being the beauty, ruggedness, outdoor recreation, wildlife and some peace and quite that so many are missing. Living in Southern Oregon going on eight years and seeing, and experiencing, County officials approving zone or land use changes that are detrimental to neighbors, citizens, tax payers, wildlife, is sickening. Tax payers/citizens live where they do for a reason. The laws currently in place state to protect quality of life, to protect wildlife habitat, agriculture, farm forest and grazing. Allowing land designated for agriculture or farm forest to be used for luxury hotels or large estates, obviously goes against what laws are already in place. It seems that way too many people that have the authority to make land use/zone changes do not look at the big picture. If land use or zone changes continue to be made, the problem will only grow and get worse. If the State does not protect agriculture, farm forest land, natural resources, what will happen? I think such precious land will slowly be reduced whereby citizens or businesses will be forced to buy their crops, their meat, their wood/trees from other states, from other countries. Local agriculture will be a thing of the past. Please, look at the big picture-- not just at the moment. A relative of mine lives in Twin Falls ID. Agriculture. Homes and big buildings are going up left and right; the streets and roads are a mess. It is not the same city that it once was; is not what it was when they chose to make Twin Falls their home. Who has the right to take that away? To diminish their property use, their property value, their quality of life. That is just a small example of not planning, not caring, not thinking of what is really important. Zones and land uses are put in place for a very good reason; that is not something to change. Land use changes are normally not good. It is my opinion that no one should have a say in making changes if it does not benefit the citizens of the state or county, does not benefit neighbors/people that live nearby that would be directly negatively affected by a change; if the change would negatively affect wildlife, water, air and would take away what is good. Agriculture and forest are important.

Buildings or businesses in the wrong location is not. Approving the change of land use for one or just a few people is just unacceptable. One now, then two, then 10, then 20; it will not stop. Wouldn't that mean that anyone could buy land/property zoned as agriculture, farm forest or prime grazing and turn around and want to change it? All they would need to do is apply for the change with the County, pay their fee and cause grief for others, and really for Oregon overall. I will tell you with experience, the County does not care. Land designated for agriculture, farm forest, wildlife, natural resources should be protected and are worth keeping, not changing or destroying. Once a County or State makes exceptions for land use or zoning, how could they say no to other changes if the approval for land/zone changes has already begun? There is no going back. Thank you.