

From: [Julie Howland](#)
To: [GUERRERO Jan * DLCD](#)
Subject: Urging Stronger Farm & Forest Land Protections
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My name is Julia Howland, I reside in Bend, Oregon at 1591 NW Saginaw Ave. I have lived in the Pacific Northwest much of my life in various communities with strong agricultural and forest lands surrounding them. I grew up in Walla Walla driving combines for harvest during my summers, I lived for many years outside of Boring surrounded by nursery, Christmas tree and berry farms, I lived in Southern Oregon surrounded by orchards and other crops and now Bend.

Although I personally don't farm, but agricultural lands, and the protection of agricultural lands, is very important to me, as is the protection of forests, critical contiguous wildlife habitat, open/wild space and easy access recreational spaces. In all the areas I have lived, I have seen prime agricultural land, as well as forest land and wildlife habitat disappear and that rate that is disappearing appears to be increasing by pressures of development, tourism, etc. I fully support strong, exclusive farm use zoning for agricultural land. I served for many years as a high school principal on both of the outskirts of Portland and Southern Oregon. I have had many students who are interested in farming but unless they are inheriting farm land, farming is out of reach for them financially. They cannot compete with developers and wealthier people who want the views and open space or privacy you get with extensive property holdings but they have no real interest in agriculture pursuits for the acreage they have or are purchasing. For so long I was proud that Oregon was a leader in land use planning laws in place but over the years that vision and leadership has been being chipped away. More and more you hear of and see well financed developers, or prospective buyers purchasing prime ag or forest property, bringing in their hired soil specialists and lawyers in to justify rezoning farm and forest land. They are increasingly successful at getting the land use changes they seek which results which encourages others to follow suit. The result, Oregon is losing prime forest and ag land that visionary Oregonians years ago sought to protect and farmers are priced out. It's time to close the loopholes!

I greatly appreciate the work of the "Technical Working Group." They have come up with a strong list of fixes, some are "easy fixes" (fixes that, with your support, can be implemented quickly (in 2024) as well as solid recommendations that are equally important but will take more time (because funding would have to be figured out) to implement. I would ask you to move forward with their recommendations and to move quickly on those recommendations that can be addressed in the short-term i.e. in 2024. Specifically, I would ask you to:

- 1) Equal the playing field. Do not let agricultural land use zoning decisions be decided on a case-by-case level where well financed developers or individuals are allowed to hire their own soil specialists to justify rezoning ag, forest or critical wildlife habitat land.
- 2) Tighten restrictions/rules on commercial activities including agrotourism type development on prime agricultural land, it's one thing to have a small wine tasting room or a fruit stand to sell directly to customers, it's another to put in a hotel, a bar or restaurant, large parking areas all of which serves to reduce available, productive farmland. Non-farm dwellings on EFU land should be hard to get, approval should be the exception not the norm.
- 3) Clarify that the qualifying gross income to satisfy LCDC's \$80,000/\$40,000 gross income test for farm dwellings must be earned from the sale of farm products that were produced on

the land and not from the sale of products which have not yet been produced.

I also urge you to approve and move forward with the other TWG recommendations that will take longer to implement.

Ag is a huge part of Oregon's history, Oregon's culture and, I hope, Oregon's future. As we grapple with climate change and, hopefully, make changes to reduce our impact on the earth's climate, having a thriving agriculture community that includes large and small farms, as well as members of the younger and older generations will serve Oregon well.

Thank you for the work you are doing and I ask you to please support TWG's recommendations and to move as quickly as possible to put their recommendations in place.

Julie A Howland