



The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 6, 2025

To: Chair [Senator Golden](#) & Members of the [Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire](#)

Re: [SB 78](#) – Specifics for the replacement of dwellings on farm or forest land – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports SB 78 based on our positions on the statewide land use planning program and citizen participation. For over thirty years, we have testified in support of policies that promote the conservation and development of land as a natural resource, in accordance with Oregon's land use goals.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports SB 78 to protect farm and forest land by specifying a maximum size for replacement of farm dwellings. SB 78 is a very measured solution to stop the misuse of prime farm and forest lands for non-agricultural ventures and over-sized dwellings. This bill provides much needed parameters on the size of dwelling that may be built on farm or forest land to replace an existing residential building. Existing law has allowed the siting of major buildings such as hotels, mansions and commercial business enterprises such as wedding and other large event venues on prime farmland and forest land. More specificity is needed to protect these valuable resource lands. The changes in SB 78 will accomplish that. One of the main impediments to safeguarding agricultural and forest land in Oregon is the threat of urbanization through inappropriate urban dwellings, often used for commercial non-farm uses, being constructed on farm and forest land.

Adverse effects from large oversized trophy homes, hotels and other intense urban use may also include limiting or curtailing water availability for nearby farm operations. Such loss of water to agricultural enterprises and soil and water districts is often irreplaceable. Another threat is the continued inflation in farmland value. Protecting farmland from inappropriate commercial and residential development will help keep land acreage prices reasonable to assure farmland is affordable and available to young farmers just getting started and to experienced farm operators expanding their production area.

We appreciate committee members respecting statewide land use planning goals and the original intent of the ORS regarding replacement dwellings. We urge your support of SB 78.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Klein".

Barbara Klein
Acting President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Lynch".

Peggy Lynch
Natural Resources Coordinator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra U. Bishop".

Sandra U. Bishop
Agricultural Land Issues