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Via e-mail: haglu.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2919 (Schools on EFU) Testimony

Dear Chair Clem and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2919. We have concerns about the potential impacts of allowing schools on land zoned for farm use to expand on to additional agricultural land without a conditional use permit.

We recognized the need for rural schools to serve rural populations and we understand that on occasion it will make more sense for existing schools to expand. Such expansion is currently allowed under existing law subject to conditional use requirements. This conditional use land use process is important because it provides the opportunity for surrounding farmers to present their concerns to their local county officials who can then ensure that the proposed expansion will not negatively impact farming operations or increases farming costs. Similarly, it ensures that there will not be an unintended conflict between accepted farm practices like spraying and pesticide use and the presence of school children on nearby school properties. In many cases these conflicts can be remedied with conditions. School expansions are an important community process and it is not an undue burden on the school to engage in a land use process that will make for good neighbor relationships in the future.

For all of the above reasons, we request that you oppose this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meriel L. Darzen
Rural Lands Staff Attorney