

From: Scottie Jones scottie@farmstayus.com
Subject: Please add my comments to Board of Ag Resolution 310
Date: February 8, 2020 at 4:37 PM
To: kvalness@oda.state.or.us



Dear Karla,

Please add my letter below into the record for the Board of Agriculture's Resolution 310

Thank you,

Scottie Jones
Executive Director
Farm Stay USA
Alsea OR 97324

Dear Oregon Board of Agriculture,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Board of Agriculture Resolution 310 concerning agritourism on Oregon farmland. I am a farmer and farm stay host here in Oregon, but I also represent a number of farmers and ranchers here in our state as the executive director of the national trade association, U.S. Farm Stay Association, of which they are members.

As their representative, I am writing to strongly urge you to not approve the current resolution as it stands. This resolution does not meet the needs of many farmers looking to diversify their risk and generate much needed revenue to preserve their land in farming with a sustainable income from agritourism.

I have read the letters submitted in support of Resolution 310 from 1000 Friends representatives and others. The one or two people who have pushed the boundaries of agritourism are held up to represent all of us - as if any and all agritourism endeavors stress infrastructure, are excessively noisy, make for poor neighbors, and destroy the peace and quiet of the countryside.

In common, these letters suggest our rural towns are better locations for agritourism. This argument is wrong on so many levels. Who in our rural towns will be putting on these activities and why haven't they stepped up to the plate already? Has anyone taken a look at what most of our rural towns look like? Rural does not mean agricultural necessarily. The appeal of agritourism to guests is specifically based on the landscape, the experience, and the setting of a farm or ranch. Looking at my own community of Alsea, despite numerous attempt by outside agencies to help with a rural development plan, nothing has happened; yet my own farm stay provides jobs for locals in the town and my guests eat meals at the local restaurant and buy goods at the general store. That is rural economic development created through an agritourism activity.

Which brings me to the second point about throwing agritourism at rural towns. We farms and ranches don't invite auests to our farms for our health: we do so with the

entrepreneurial understanding that this diversification strategy can help reduce risk, produce additional revenue streams not necessarily dependent on the weather or other factors beyond our control, and if successful provide for our families in a manner most people expect from a fulltime job or business. This allows us to compensate for the fact we work 7-days-a-week and probably have a 5-day-a-week in town job as well. Maybe now we can just look to one job to fill our time! All you need to do is ask most medium and small farmers if they work an outside job to support their farm and their family – their answer will be ‘yes’.

Resolution 310 needs a rework. I am happy to provide input and energy into a more balanced resolution that addresses the issues in front of us, especially as I hear from my own constituents about the unbalanced and confusing interpretations of our current land-use regulations regarding agritourism. I would have liked to present my thoughts publicly during the comment period on Wednesday, but am unable to get to Salem at that time. Please accept these comments in place of a personal appearance.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely, Scottie Jones

*Scottie Jones | U.S. Farm Stay Association | Alsea OR | 541-487-4966 |
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