21 April 2014

Coos County Planning Commission
250 N. Baxter
Coquille, OR 97423

Dear Commission Members,

We appreciate notification of proposed changes to Coos County Planning regulations in accordance with Measure 56. Nevertheless, we have a few concerns and want to go on record.

- We don’t believe the notification is sufficient to determine exactly what will be changed and what will remain. The intent of the changes doesn’t provide sufficient information. While we are required to comment on the changes in writing 10 days before the scheduled hearings, we won’t actually know specifically what changes are proposed until seven days before the hearings. One of the biggest problems with making legislative changes is unintended consequences. Unless we know what the specific wording changes will be—what will be added, what will be deleted, what will be changed and where—we cannot determine if there will be consequences from those changes that were not intended, but become reality because no one really thought about them. It is common for a body like the planning commission to be so focused on what they are trying to accomplish for good, that they fail to recognize the full ramification of their actions and actually create a problem that was unintended but harmful nonetheless.

- File No. AM-14-05 amending text on land use entities is of concern. Although we understand the necessity of responsible use of eminent domain, submitting a land use application for our land without our signatures means it could be submitted without our knowledge. Surely the county is not suggesting that others should be able to propose a use of our land that we wouldn’t know about until after the process was complete, effectively forbidding us a voice in the process. While it might be vastly more convenient for government to decide what to do with private property without the input and objection of the owners of that property, it hardly seems appropriate in a nation based on the voice of the people and strong values of private ownership. In fact, we would even question the constitutionality of such a regulatory change. Again, until we actually know what wording changes are being proposed, it is difficult to assess the unintended consequences of such a change.

- File No. AM-14-06 seems vague in terms of intention. The cryptic description leaves us wondering if it will allow the county to take an acre of our land as a
parking lot for construction equipment and staging, or to expand the easement to increase the width of county road right-of-ways. Again, the intent seems to be to give the right to the county to take any portion of our land without our voices being heard in the process, or without appropriate compensation for our loss. Such actions dramatically affect the resale value of property.

- File No. AM-14-07 is of concern in terms of ramifications. What ramifications are there of “property line adjustments” and of “addressing water requirements?” Being surrounded by cranberry growers already, we are concerned about water even though our parents established their home on this property long before it became surrounded by cranberry bogs. Now will we be required to go to additional expense to satisfy water requirements because the aquifer is threatened by overuse when we haven’t been the ones overusing it?
- The Measure 56 notice concludes that “these amendments may affect the permissible uses of your property...and may change the value of your property.” Yet the notice has not given us sufficient information to determine whether or not the changes will actually affect us. How can we possibly comment and “provide evidence” without really knowing the impact the changes will have because we don’t really know what the changes are!

Essentially, you are saying to us “trust us.” But history has shown that government is only truly honest and fair when citizens keep a watchful eye. Knowledge is the basis for that watchfulness. You have not given us the information and knowledge we need to be watchful, responsible citizens, and that certainly doesn’t engender our trust. While civic servants must surely get tired of the time consuming process of informing citizens and involving them in decision-making, we hope you will have the respect for the citizens of the county and our democratic system of government to not be hasty in your effort to make changes, and to fully involve the private property owners in a meaningful way to get diverse viewpoints on the impact your actions will have on the lives and livelihoods of the citizens and taxpayers you serve.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Laurie J. Wilson  Ann Jaussi
Trustee  Trustee
A&L Trust  A&L Trust
Owners of the home and property at 87229 Davis Creek Lane, Bandon, Oregon, 97411

Mailing Address: 1101 Eagle Ridge Circle, Sandy, UT 84094