

12/15/2025

I am making this public comment for the record.

I am greatly concerned about the current discussions regarding Accessory Dwelling Units on rural lands in the National Scenic Area. The land is already zoned, and to allow an additional dwelling will be a direct violation of the National Scenic Area Act. The entire purpose of the act is to protect land from urban sprawl, especially agriculture lands. Using the argument of a housing shortage and need for tourist rentals is weak. To build a second home on ag land will be decreasing the land availability. I also have difficulty believing that a homeowner is in desperate need for income, but is able to spend huge amounts of money to build a second house, plus pay an increase in property taxes and insurance because of the second dwelling.....this does not sound like a dire financial situation to me. Instead this sounds like a ploy to circumvent the NSA regulations.

I have lived on 58 acres in the General Management area since 1987, Over the first 25 years I tried raising cattle, then goats, I had horses and chickens, then tried growing hay. Though each was a fun and interesting adventure, none paid enough to even begin to break even. I had a full time job and sometimes a second job to make ends meet. Ask anyone trying to farm, they will tell you that there is almost no way to make enough money from the land to pay the mortgage, insurance, property taxes, gas, food, etc. I and every rural neighbor around me have jobs: teachers, bus drivers, firefighters, letter carriers, police officers, mill workers, nurses, airline pilots....etc. That is the reality of life, even my neighbor with a 300 acre cattle ranch worked full time off the property. So just as Commissioner Liberty said, supporting jobs within the urban areas is important for additional income to ag landowners. Ag land is crucial to providing food and products for our communities. That is why counties offer a property tax break to landowners that do provide needed products.

Hotel Motel Taxes go to the city. Allowing unregulated rentals is actually taking revenue away from the city. If housing is needed, and

hotel space for tourists is needed, they should be built within the existing urban areas just as the Scenic Act requires.

At a past meeting it was implied that Gorge residents feel under attack by the Gorge Commission. I know for a fact that most of my Gorge neighbors do not feel that way. We see how growth is eating up farm land in Camas, Vancouver, Battle ground. We are grateful to be living in the Scenic Area and are appreciative of the efforts to keep this area protected from urban sprawl. As someone that recently went through the process to build a new garage, I experienced the headaches of getting that permit. I know the process of building can be a royal pain in the tush, but it is a small price to pay to know that I will always enjoy this rural lifestyle, as will future generations.

The rules for number of houses per parcel in the National Scenic Area are very clear. With the terrible cut in funding, the Gorge Commission has a lot on your plate. The last thing you should be doing is to open the can of worms allowing more homes per parcel than the Scenic Act intended. This *WILL* lead to lawsuits that will take valuable time and be a huge expense that you can not afford. Please drop this idea of ADUs and stay focused on your current role to protect the Gorge from the very urban sprawl ADUs represent.

You've probably heard the expression.....

"Death by a thousand cuts."

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