

**Ways & Means Transportation & Economic Development
subcommittee**

From: Russ Dondero, WC-CAN/IFCH

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**Rep. Jenson, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Shields, Rep. McKeown, Rep.
Read, Sen. Hansell**

Chair Jenson and committee members:

SB 246A

I think Senator Johnson asked the most important question at
Monday's hearing:

***"Why is it the job of the public to aggregate property" for
private development?"***

I would respectfully add another question –

***"Why should local jurisdictions take the risk of developing
parcels of property as opposed to private "traded" sector
business?"***

In my discipline of political science the term "mobilization of bias"
captures or frames SB 246 quite well. This bill is designed to
incentivize "traded sector" businesses, such as Nike and Intel which in
effect privileges the metro area over the rest of Oregon.

As an Oregonian who grew up in Roseburg, I think the "other" Oregon
needs our attention not the metro area and certainly not Washington
County which weathered the storm of the Great Recession and is in full
comeback mode unlike southern Oregon, the coast or eastern Oregon.

The supporters of this bill in their presentation on Monday never
addressed an obvious question:

***Why do such global companies need such help? I feel that SB
246 is a "solution in need of a problem?"***

We've seen in recent weeks that Nike had a choice between expanding its campus on land adjacent to it or to locate in Portland's South Waterfront Park area. Nike made its decision without the benefit of HB 246. And so has Intel made similar choices.

This bill given the development climate in eastern Washington County will privilege Hillsboro and Beaverton which frankly need no such help while leaving cities like Forest Grove on the western edge of the Metro area and the rest of Oregon high and dry.

By contrast SB 241 offer you an alternative vision of development:

By supporting collaboration between the University of Oregon, Oregon State plus local jurisdictions in Lane, Benton and Linn counties will accelerate start-ups under the auspices of RAIN.

My only concern with that bill is nothing is mentioned of private universities in Oregon which educate over one-third of college students in Oregon.

Let me give you an example of collaboration from the private independent college sector. Years ago Pacific's school of Optometry developed a sports vision clinic program with which Nike collaborates.

Imagine the possibilities if Oregon private independent colleges were joint partners in RAIN along with our public sector universities? But also what about RAIN's application to Southern Oregon, OIT and OSU's Cascade Campus in Bend?

Where would the Ashland and Medford area be without the vision of those faculty and community members who started the Ashland Shakespearian Festival decades ago? We've got to get beyond our fixation with traded sector industry.

I think the concept of SB 241 has merit while SB 246 accelerates the uneven economic development and disconnect in Oregon between urban and rural Oregon.

As the gentleman who testified on Monday coming from his experience as a start up investor "micro start ups" are the key point of development in business. Start up business runs the gamut from the sciences to the arts. Why limit ourselves to technology support?

If the legislature wants to support economic development the key is helping small firms who employ between 20-50 employees not multinational corporations who have benefitted for decades from Measure 5 and now from Oregon Strategic Investment Program.

Other issues which were not allayed by the proponent's testimony on Monday:

1. This bill transfers land use planning power to Business Oregon instead of keeping it within LCDC. When one reads the bill the proponent's assurances to the contrary are not all that clear in the language of the bill as written.

Ever since the Nike deal went down in the special session I've been concerned that we are ceding way too much power to the Governor, Business Oregon and local officials willing to sign those ubiquitous "non-disclosure" agreements.

2. In looking at the map of the sites proposed, those in Washington County are on the boundary of urban/rural reserve areas. We've already lost too much prime farmland to developers especially in Washington County north of the Sunset highway.

As the spokesman for the Audubon Society said we shouldn't push the costs of mitigation onto the public. This should be the responsibility of the original landowners and/or those who propose to develop such land. I concur.

This bill could lead to endless legal challenges since such land is a dual federal/state responsibility if I understand the federal precedents/law here correctly. I think this may open a Pandora's box of endless litigation which does nobody any good except lawyers...

We need to craft an economic development strategy which ends the mobilization of bias which privileges the Metro area or I-5 corridor and instead focuses on the rest of Oregon.

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