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May 20, 2013

To: Senate Business and Transportation Committee
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2657A - Support

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2657A. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities, protect family farms and forests, and provide transportation and housing choice.

HB 2657A is a very modest step forward on a problem that the state is long-overdue in addressing: that of the conversion of Oregon's existing industrial land to non-industrial uses.

HB 2657A establishes requirements that must be met before a local government may approve an application to rezone industrial land for nonindustrial use. The applicant for the rezoning must show they have taken certain steps to advertise the site's availability for industrial use, and that changed circumstances have reduced the utility of the site for industrial use.

Oregon's best land opportunities to attract and grow industrial users are on industrial land already inside urban growth boundaries. These sites are already appropriately zoned for such use, they have all or most of the necessary infrastructure, they are usually located near to where potential workers already live, and they are often located near key transportation facilities that will not be re-produced elsewhere. The state has already lost key industrial sites to other uses, including sites along interstate highways and other transportation corridors.

We recommend that in addition, the Legislature direct the Department of Land Conservation and Development Commission to examine and report back to the next legislative session with recommendations on other methods to prevent conversion of key industrial sites, and to institute a system to track proposals to convert such sites. Some cities have already taken steps to reduce industrial land conversion, which might serve as models for other parts of the state.

Thank you for consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy".

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Policy Director