

May 28, 2013

Senator Hass and Committee Members,

My name is Kim Strelchun, and I am the vice-chair of the Hillsboro School District Board of Directors. I would like to speak to you today in regards to HB2898 which now includes amendments previously contained in SB600.

The Hillsboro School Board prides itself in detailed, long range planning. Since our unification, our district has proactively planned for projected growth. Through this tedious, time-consuming process we not only work with our partners at the city and county, we also rely on data and research from Portland State University. Washington County is a growing community, and we have done our due diligence in planning ahead. Our long-range planning committee includes not only administration, staff and board members but community members who have invested a great deal of time and thought into this process. This is not a static project that we do once and file away. Nor is it something we take lightly. This is a process that is constantly reviewed and updated as PSU data is adjusted, projections are updated and our partners get more detailed in their planning.

We are a fiscally responsible board and district. By planning ahead and staying focused on growth projections and trends, we have been able to buy land in advance of needing it. Without the time consuming planning on the front end, we would not be able to meet the changing demands of our community while at the same time being incredibly responsible with our taxpayer's dollars. Being ahead of the need and not having to condemn property is something our board is very proud of.

I would like to point out that in our long-range plans, we have always included the South Cooper Mountain area that is in question. Not only do we currently have capacity for students that will be moving into this area, we have planned for the growth in this area. We have one small elementary school that currently serves this area and has the capacity to continue to serve this area. In fact, without the projected growth, we run the risk of not enrolling enough students to maintain this campus. We have capacity at our middle and high schools, and we also have plans as this entire region grows, to grow along with it. We have land banked in a number of areas in south Hillsboro, and we have always included the projected growth from South Cooper Mountain in our plans. I do not believe the same can be said for our sister school district which is at capacity and has not included South Cooper Mountain in their plans.

As an elected school board member, I take my job very seriously. I believe school boards have the expertise and knowledge to continue the long range planning for schools in our communities. I would hate to see a portion of my elected position given to another entity whose focus may be something other than education. And I would hate to see the good work of HB2898 which helps some of our most needy students through transition services get lost in this unrelated discussion. I urge you not to include amendment language from SB600 in this bill.

Sincerely,

Kim Strelchun  
Vice Chair  
Hillsboro School District Board of Directors