



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

June 24, 2013

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Representative Ben Unger, Co-Chair
Senator Chris Edwards, Co-Chair
Members of the Committee

Re: HB 2202A, Mining on land zoned for exclusive farm use—SUPPORT

The League is a non-partisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. We are strongly supportive of Oregon's land use planning system but acknowledge that compromise and long-term strategies are needed when goals conflict—in this case Goals 3 and 5. Some version of this bill has appeared before the Legislature for many sessions, and each time the League has testified in support, ever hopeful that the wisdom of preserving Class I and II soils in the Willamette Valley will be self-evident to legislators.

We feel so strongly on the importance of this issue that we agreed to represent the public interest in the lengthy deliberations of the Aggregate/Farmland Consensus Group, which met from 2004 to 2006. We came away from those meetings clearly convinced that stronger safeguards need to be in place to preserve our most valuable farmland. Yet it is now 2013, and aggregate operations continue to be permitted on Class I and II soils throughout the Willamette Valley and valuable farmland continues to be lost forever.

The League believes that both the aggregate and farming industries supply a critical public need, but we also believe that alternative sites exist for the aggregate industry to supply needed rock for roads and the building industry that do not involve our best soils. We strongly urge this committee to take action so that a solution can be counted on by a date certain. Our agricultural industry is too vital to Oregon's economy to put this off for another ten years.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views.

Sincerely,

Robin Wisdom
President

Marge Easley
Natural Resources Specialist