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February 21, 2013

TO: Representative Brian Clem, Chair of the Land Use Committee
Representative Kevin Cameron, Vice Chair
Representative Lew Frederick, Vice Chair
Representative John Davis
Representative Paul Holvey
Representative Kim Thatcher
Representative Ben Unger

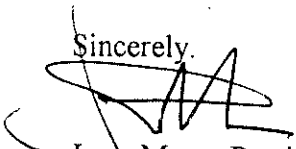
During this legislative session we are requesting your support and approval of two very important bills. If adopted, they would correct some of the inequities in the current ordinances which easily allow the conversion to mining and the eventual loss of Oregon's high value agricultural soils located on the larger rivers and streams in Western Oregon.

HB 2201 would require the reclamation of future mining sites back to their original condition. HB 2202 requires an alternative analysis prior to the approval of converting high value, class 1 & 2 soils from agriculture use to mineral extraction.

Since these flood plain soils are close to a river, they have special unique qualities. They are naturally fertile, highly productive and in a slightly warmer micro-climate area. Nearly all have old irrigation rights; and due to low head elevation, can deliver irrigation water using less energy than surrounding higher elevation farmland. But, due to the present conversion process, these special soils and areas are being lost at an alarming rate. During the time period from 2004 until 2012, Yamhill County lost 800 acres of prime high value soils that supports our county's economy. Grand Island, a four thousand acre island with high value class 1 & 2 soils, lost 16% of its land base to mineral extraction!

This continuing conversion is also devastating to the families who live in the river communities along Oregon's Rivers. Grand Island is also home to approximately twenty-five families with the majority being involved in some type of agricultural production to meet their families' needs. They know that the loss of Grand Island's high value soils can never be replaced. In contrast, the aggregate industry has other alternatives and areas. Therefore, to protect Oregon's productive high value farmland and the families that depend on them, we strongly urge you to support HB 2201 & HB 2202.

Sincerely,



Jerry Mann, President

Yamhill County Farm Bureau President