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February 16, 2015

Senator Lee Beyer, Chair, and Members
Senate Business & Transportation Committee
State Capitol
Salem, OR

Re: SB 534

1000 Friends of Oregon is a 40-year old, non-profit, statewide organization. We advocate for livable urban and rural communities, protecting family farms and forests, and conserving natural areas, largely through the implementation and improvement of Oregon's land use planning program.

1000 Friends opposes SB 534. Senate Bill 534 authorizes a city to provide urban sewer and water services to an airport without going through the procedures that currently exist for providing such services if needed. In general, Oregon's land use program directs that urban services are to be provided inside urban growth boundaries (UGBs). These are expensive, long-term investments that are meant to encourage more dense and efficient use of land inside cities and towns. Urban services are not appropriate for rural areas, where such investments often conflict with farming and forestry activities and because of their costs, bring pressure to develop farm and forest lands and contribute to inefficient sprawl.

However, the land use program provides at least three ways in which a city can provide city and/or water services to a use outside the city, if there is a need: an airport requests an "exception" to have an urban service extend across rural lands; the use is added to a city's UGB and annexed; or DEQ declares a health hazard that necessitates urban sewer and/or water service.

As we understand, this bill arises from the Aurora Airport. None of these existing processes has been used. These processes exist because it is a significant long-term investment of a city's funds and service capacity to provide urban services outside its boundary. Running urban services through rural areas can also have a significant and adverse impact on farming or forestry practices. It is important for a community to have a full discussion and decision before embarking on this type of commitment. That has not happened in Aurora. We ask that you not recommend passage of this bill. Instead, the Aurora Airport should to the city and county and use the existing processes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy".

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Policy Director and Staff Attorney