

*Testimony*

*Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources*

*April 6, 2015*

Senator Edwards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 716. My name is Jon Iverson and I am the president of Clackamas County Farm Bureau, as well as a farmer in Clackamas County. Clackamas County Farm Bureau is against this bill not because it takes farmland and earmarks it for immediate industrial development (we are not excited about that but realize it happens), but because we disagree with the process the legislature is using to accomplish that objective.

Oregon's land use laws already have a process for flagging land for future development, and it seems it has only been a couple of years since we worked on the urban and rural reserve lines. This bill would totally bypass that process without any regard for the farmers that carefully negotiated that process, and relied on the assurance that their land would not be earmarked for development for at least 50 years. I also think that SB 716 sets a dangerous precedent of non-farmers buying land in the hopes that they can repeat this process and change their land's designation into something other than agricultural use, driving up even more the cost of agricultural land. As a 28 year old farmer it is already near impossible for me to afford to buy land to farm, this will increase farmland's cost as investors can buy the ground for more money in the hopes of going through the legislature to change their designation instead of the ground being protected in the rural reserve and being subject to the carefully negotiated local process.

I understand the urgency to get more industrial in the hopes of creating jobs to help the economy, but there is already land designated for this purpose. Clackamas County urges the legislature not to pass an end road around a carefully negotiated process that is being relied on by many farmers within Clackamas County. Please oppose SB 716.