



Audubon Comments on SB 716

April 6, 2015

Dear Chair Edwards and Members of the Senate Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources,

I am writing on behalf of the Audubon Society of Portland and our 15,000 members in the Portland Metro Region to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 716. Senate Bill 716 would allow each county in the Portland Metro Region to take 150-500 acres of land outside the urban growth boundary (UGB) — currently designated as urban reserves or rural reserves — and turn them into large-lot industrial sites. We believe that passage of SB 716 would undermine confidence in urban and rural lands planning process, would break faith with the myriad interests that negotiated the urban and rural reserves, and would expose some of our most important farm and natural resource lands to development. We urge the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources to vote “no” on SB 716.

The urban and rural lands designation process was supposed to provide a clear, 50-year road map for where the Portland metro region could expand and where agricultural and natural resources lands outside the UGB would be preserved. HB 4708 passed by the legislature just one year ago was supposed to provide final resolution to outstanding issues that remained with the urban and rural reserves process. Now just one year later, SB 716 would throw all of that work into jeopardy and create exactly the type of uncertainty, chaos and hyper-politicization around UGB expansions that the urban and rural reserves process was designed to avoid.

Sb 716 should be rejected because:

- The Portland Metro Region already has an adequate supply of large lot industrial land to accommodate future growth. Metro estimates a demand for 8-34 large lots for industrial, flex, and warehouse needs over the next 20 years. A study done by McKenzie group for the Portland Business Alliance, NAIOP, the Port of Portland, Metro, and other development interests found that the Metro area has 54 large lots industrial sites inside the UGB. 14 are ready to go, the remainder need some investment. Metro has over 8000 acres of land zoned for industrial use, inside the UGB, in parcels over 25 acres. Economic development does not require more land; it

needs investments in infrastructure, work force development, research and development, and other business development actions.

- Adding more industrial land to the Metro Region will compete directly with existing shovel ready industrial parcels in the Willamette Valley. New industrial development should be targeted toward the existing industrial land base.
- It will jeopardize prime farmland and natural resource land. The rural reserves were set aside to protect our most import farmland and natural resource areas. SB 716 would make these lands once again vulnerable to development just a year after the public was told they would be avoided for at least the next 50 years.

We urge the Senate Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources to honor the work and commitments that were made in the urban and rural land designation process and reject SB 716.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Sallinger". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Sallinger
Conservation Director
Audubon Society of Portland