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April 13, 2017

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 186: Rural and urban reserves in Metro region

Chair Dembrow and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 432, 602, SB 608, SB 612, and SB 618. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

1000 Friends of Oregon opposes SB 186. This bill would undo specific rural reserve designations in Clackamas, Washington, and Multnomah counties, thereby opening certain areas designated as “rural reserves” for eventual development. It would undermine the region’s multi-year effort to come to a consensus about where long-term growth should – and should not – happen.

Perhaps most importantly, it would undermine the region’s residents’ willingness to participate in any kind of process like this again – where certainty was promised, only to be taken away because some individual land owners were not designated “urban reserve” – a category that did not even exist a few years ago. The *lack* of being designated an urban reserve did not change those landowners’ property designation or expectations one bit.

SB 186 bill proposes to remove the “rural reserve” designation from three farming areas that many worked to protect, and thought they did so.

Clackamas County: SB 186 would convert 18 acres of land zoned for exclusive farm use from rural reserve to “rural industrial.” The parcel is located south of the Willamette River, in the larger 800-acre French Prairie Rural Reserve. It is sometimes called the “Red Barn” property and it is surrounded by active farming. This area has been continually designated as a rural reserve – without controversy – until it was purchased by an auto dealer and others, who first went to Clackamas County about a year ago, trying to re-zone the land to allow parking, servicing, and detailing new cars for the dealership. This faced opposition from Clackamas County residents, three state agencies, and several organizations. Now those same landowners are attempting to gain through legislation what they cannot achieve through the law or obtain public support for.

Washington County. SB 186 adversely impacts two different but large and productive farming areas in Washington County, by converting land located in the midst of these areas from rural to urban reserve.

- Over 1500 acres located south of Highway 26 and stretching across a huge swath, from the Brookwood Parkway west to McKay Creek.
- Three adjacent parcel of lands totaling under 100 acres, in the Helvetia area north of Highway 26 and to the west of 185th.

These are excellent farm lands, and are located in Oregon's richest areas of agricultural production. Loss of this land to urbanization would have a permanent and detrimental impact on the future of the farm economy in the region and state.

It is time to let the rural and urban reserves be implemented, so Metro and its cities can determine whether a UGB expansion is warranted and if so, where. This provides cities the certainty they need to plan infrastructure, and farmers the certainty they need to make crop investments.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director