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From
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February 6, 2018

To
Honorable Chair and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

RE opposition to HB 4075. It's not the right bill, nor the right time.

You have received thoughtful and passionate testimony from both sides of the issue, a rewrite of the Grand Bargain. **Clearly, the scale tips to "do not pass".**

Proponents

In support, several local residents and stakeholders complain that they have trouble moving farm trucks and equipment onto the busy roadway; they prefer land use decisions to be made locally; they mistakenly feel that because the legislature stole their Urban Reserve designation their land is "tied up" in perpetuity; they lament they "can't" sell their property; they insist that while they aren't trying to get rich they want to leave options open for heirs; they claim that urbanization is a higher/better use for this farmland. **HB 4075 is not the way to solve these complaints.**

Threat to Farming Economy

Meanwhile opponents, including some who live within the 1700 acres, explain that farming already IS the highest and best use for world class farmland. These 1700 acres contain some of the highest value soils in the world -- there are none better than Class 1 & 2 soils. Unprotected, the supply of excellent soils is again threatened, both locally and globally, as urbanization sprawls unchecked. Further, while the farming economy in Washington County is a net sum gain traded sector economy, its survival also depends upon thriving, local, support businesses for equipment, maintenance, crop processing, sales and shipping. It's mutual; such support businesses require busy local farms and farmers. Diminished acreage in farming will cripple the whole business resource, beginning a catastrophic fall of viability for our local farming economy. **HB 4075 gives neither the state nor local communities the protections needed for high value farmlands.**

Existing land use law compromised

Oregonians rights and responsibilities to make land use plans in our local jurisdictions are encased in SB 100 and SB 1011. These laws are trampled when there's repeated meddling by the legislature. Opening this acreage to potential development would negatively impact our entire Metro region, creating imbalance and continued political fighting. Expressions by local citizens show that they are troubled, frustrated and disrespected by not being included in legislative decisions which are better made in the local process. **HB 4075 is no help to Oregon's land use laws.**

4075 is not the bill that's needed

This bill does not address most of the issues raised by its proponents -- that's appropriate, as their concerns are better handled locally. Nor does it "fix" HB 4078, the 2014 Grand Bargain, assuming any fix is needed. Additionally this bill, a rewrite of HB 4078, compounds the inherent conflicts of that bill with regard to local jurisdiction planning rights and responsibilities. With these limitations, this bill does not serve statewide needs. HB 4075 benefits only a local area, and only a few landowners who no longer respect their world-class soils. **HB 4075 is not a problem solver.**

No urgency at present

Even the proponents admit that there's no current urgency for urbanization of this prime farmland. Having gained a windfall of many hundreds of acres in the Grand Bargain, it will be years before Hillsboro will need more expansion territory. **HB 4075 is not needed, especially not in a short legislative session.**

In summary, NO on 4075

This bill addresses an issue that should be decided locally, not by the legislature. Existing law allows and demands local procedures. **Please Vote no.**

Thank you for your consideration.