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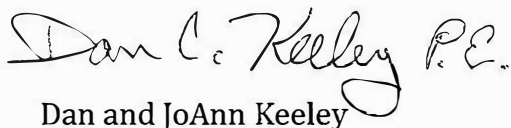
To: Joint Transportation Committee

Re: SB 431

We write in opposition to SB 413 and in support of Friends of French Prairie, a land use advocacy organization in the north Willamette Valley. This letter is to document our personal opposition to SB 431 for the following reasons:

- This bill is designed to enable a west side bypass around Metro Portland and it would take huge swaths of prime EFU farmland and thus negatively impact Oregon agriculture. It would do this by overriding rural reserve designations, established by Metro and designed to protect farm land from urbanization. The same process could also play out in any other part of the State.
- As most taxing districts are currently under compression of ad valorem tax rates this bill would have the practical effect of diverting money from schools, Fire Districts and others in favor of building toll highways.
- The obvious goal here is to enable commuters to drive faster, live farther away from their jobs and have their acre in paradise. This will, however, increase the pressure to develop large suburban communities in the heart of farming areas, increase costs for all citizens and may well cause the collapse of Oregon's land use regulations just when they are needed most to help deal with climate change.
- The bill will establish another layer of bureaucracy in a state that has too much already. Even worse it encourages conflict by allowing the new districts to sabotage the efforts of ODOT and Metro to limit climate damage and by overriding land use planning goals aimed at efficient development in favor of California style suburban sprawl.

The existing land use system has been used to unnecessarily restrict development and protect wealthy districts in the past. This is an abuse of the system, not an indictment of it. The objective of the system is to accommodate people's needs efficiently and with minimum impacts on the environment. It could stand some improvement but let's not throw the baby out with the bath water here. Please oppose this bill and do not advance it out of committee.


Dan and JoAnn Keeley


Farmer