



Save Helvetia
13260 N.W. Bishop Road
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124
www.SaveHelvetia.org

March 15, 2021

Rep. Barbara Smith Warner, Chair, House Rules Committee
Rep. Christine Drazen
Rep. Paul Holvey
Rep. Daniel Bonham
Rep. Julie Fahey
Rep. Andrea Salinas
Rep. Jack Zika

cc: Kathryn Harrington, Chair
Washington County Board of Commissioners

Re: House Bill 2837
Testimony in OPPOSITION
Submitted for Public Hearing on March 16, 2021

Chair Smith Warner and Committee Members,

Comments for the Record

HB 2837

Save Helvetia is a private non-profit advocacy organization that has been working since 2011 to protect farmland in Washington County. We formed during the urban and rural reserves process. We provided volumes of citizen science describing the attributes of the Greater Helvetia area. We testified at the county, Metro, and DLCD/LCDC levels, later appealing to the State Court of Appeals. Our effort incurred \$60,000 in expenses

and logged over 10,000 volunteer hours. We sought to negotiate with Washington County pending the court's ruling and were rebuffed. In 2014, the Oregon State Court of Appeals ruled that Washington County's reserves plan was not legal, that they had created "psuedo-factors" outside of the statute/OARs to guide their land selections. That was the basis of our and our partners' appeals.

Having lost in court, Washington County faced the prospect of redoing the reserves process until Reps. Brian Clem and Ben Unger brought forward then HB 4078. This bill, The Grand Bargain, redrew the reserves maps to the satisfaction of all the stakeholders. A **FIAT** of the agreement was that no party could return to the legislature for land use amendments and that there would be no effort to seek more urban reserve until 75% of the metro area urban reserve had been utilized. HB 4078 passed unanimously and was signed into law in 2014.

Now, Rep. Neron was asked by Washington County to accomplish this HB 2837 designation change. Washington County did not communicate with the appellants to the reserves settlement regarding this change. Nor do they explain why it has taken 7 years to identify this issue with the reserves settlement. We have been watchful and alert to bills asking for legislative amendments to The Grand Bargain which circumvent the required local government process, and we have objected to several bills.

In this case, while we remain watchful, based on representations from Washington County's DLUT (Erin Doyle) we are of the understanding that this will allow the county to do proper long term planning of the transportation system at the junction of SW Lasich Road and its junction with SW Roy Rogers. Further, they do not intend this as a prelude to any change in land use or re-designation of the lands on either side of the road. With this assurance, which is of vital importance to us, we do not oppose this legislation.

Respectfully,

Cherry Amabisca, President
Save Helvetia

Robert Bailey, Secretary
Save Helvetia

