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February 8, 2021

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Opposition to SB 16** - Allows counties to rezone lands within Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region from exclusive farm use to residential uses.

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Friends of Marion County is an independent 501(c)(3) farmland protection organization founded in 1998. Our mission is to protect farm and forestland, parks, and open space.

Friends of Marion County is opposed to SB 16. There are many reasons to oppose SB 16. We will list a few.

#### 1. SB 16 has numerous flaws.

We opposed a previous version of this concept in 2019, namely HB 2456. Our view of this proposal has not changed.

- The recent development of the re-load facility to support the farming community at Nyssa contradicts the notion that economic development in the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region requires the establishment of 2-acre ranchette housing. These houses, perhaps as many as 100, are potential conflicts to farming operations.

- The proposed review board decision is not appealable. This flies in the face of everything we have come to expect to protect the rights of affected citizens, namely **Goal 1**.

- This proposal raises the cost of farmland to new farming ventures which is counter-productive to agriculture development in the region.

- Sufficient land for expensive housing is now available in Ontario's UGB to satisfy future needs.

February 6, 2021

Page 2

## **2. Our Land Use Laws Need Protection**

SB 16 sets a dangerous precedent and will lead to more counties requesting similar treatment. When will the types and numbers of exceptions end?

We hope this letter provides an important assessment of the proposal and that the Legislature will consider the importance of protecting EFU land from this kind of use.

**We hope you will make the wise decision to reject SB 16.**

Thank you for listening.

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