

I am writing in support of SB 16 as it would open new rural residential housing opportunities for the part of Malheur County that comprises the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region. It was this type of housing that my family was interested in when I decided to move to Malheur County to work with its agriculture industry. Unfortunately, that type of housing was not available in Malheur County. Consequently, we settled on a small acreage parcel in Idaho, and understandably, Idaho is where my family is rooted.

Although I may be an Idaho resident, I have a deep professional and personal commitment to the well-being and success of Malheur County. It is my pleasure to serve as one of the members of the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board, and our board has advocated for the goals of SB 16 as a means to help better the well-being of the border region. SB 16 would allow a small number of acres (200) to be converted to highly desirable rural residential parcels. That change could attract up to one hundred new families to Malheur County and become integrated in its community.

SB 16 has protections that would preserve high value farmlands from development, and through its deed restriction (Section 2(1)(e)) protects neighboring agricultural interests from potential disruptions from new residents of rezoned parcels. Further, SB 16 allows the county to create a review board to ensure the appropriateness of rezoning requests.

The local farmers that I work with support SB 16 as it provides new housing opportunities without sacrificing productive farmlands.

I encourage you to support SB 16.

Sincerely,
Stuart Reitz