



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

January 29, 2023

RE: Recommendations for Industrial Land in Semiconductor Industry

Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Semiconductors,

I'm a lifelong Oregonian, parents and grandparents, too, several generations back to the Oregon Trail and the state constitution. They came for the amazing farmland near Salem and Forest Grove. They built communities and cared for the land and each other. I restore a dozen acres of wildlife habitat. My family works in engineering, medicine and education.

As I follow the work of your Joint Committee and the Task Force response to the CHIPS Act, I'm impressed by how the work has energized you as well as so many who appear before you, all bringing elements to feed into and fuel your work! You're all answering President Biden's call and competing with every other state. There's a chance you can win. I'd be giddy too.

But I don't understand why there's been practically no public involvement in the process. Last December I attended a panel discussion which put a cautionary spin on the project. Indications were that farmland near Hillsboro would probably NOT be at risk since there are other areas across the state where jobs are needed. I've been reading co-chair Sollman's newsletter each week, and have been surprised to find no information about this hard-working committee! Today's hearing was only posted late on the 27th; I learned about it by chance. Is it true what I see that the chosen acreage is at the edge of Hillsboro near a rural interchange with the Sunset Highway? Do you think it's a done deal? What happened to the 1000 acres of industrial land brought into the UGB in the 2014 Grand Bargain? Promises have been made to protect our uniquely fine farmland. Will you keep them and restore some trust in local government?

We have faced this already so many times. It's unconscionable!

I really want you all to step back with me for a moment and think about our Oregon home. Think about how the Hillsboro area has already been impacted by leading the state in industrial growth. From a population at the dawn of the tech era of around 15,000, to over 110,000 now, surrounding urban and suburban areas are also keeping pace. Every week I drive a street that's no longer recognizable. The impact is not just 22,000 Intel employees and their families, but also related high tech, commercial enterprise, and congestion. Consider that Hillsboro doesn't have a problem with joblessness – bringing new jobs will create a greater shortage of homes, compounding our problems. Think about waiting longer at stop lights, bumper to

bumper, seven lanes wide. Think about our water shortages, more overcrowded classrooms and underfunded schools, about homelessness and the rising crime rate. Think about Climate Change and industrial pollutants. All sprawling over 17,000 acres of former farmland. Do we want more of that? Is it sustainable? No. We want education, health care, affordable homes.

Think about the beautiful, vast, open fields that change by the seasons of planting and harvesting along the Sunset Highway north of Hillsboro. They are not empty land. Besides being part of our identity, our pastoral view, and wildlife viewing spaces, those fields are high value farmland. That doesn't mean farmland with the highest price tag – it means soils that are equal to the best in the state and the best in the world. That IS sustainable, if you protect it.

Worldwide, if we want enough farmland to feed our people and support wildlife, which lands should we want to save? The best soils? Isn't it time to begin that discussion?

Even without irrigation, these soils support grain, hay, and seed crops that are exported across the state, the nation, and around the world. The grain harvest is milled into flour and cereals, or becomes feed for high quality animals to put meat on the table. The hay is specifically well-suited for animal feed across Oregon and exported overseas. Grass seed becomes highly prized turf for sports fields and suburban landscaping nationwide. These crops cannot be grown just anywhere. They require very large acreage of the best soils, huge equipment, and ready access to highways for international distribution. If the market demands a different crop, farming can adjust. But when you destroy these fields, these soils are gone – topsoils cannot recover from the insults of grading, filling, or digging ditches. They can never be replaced,

What Oregon and our high tech industry need most is more investment in education. It would be the best strategy for attracting future business and for building the resilience of our population.

Isn't it ironic that land use laws that were written to protect our good farmland contain provisions for turning it over to urban growth, but there's no similar provision for growth of agriculture? Would you change that trend? Would you build our #2 economy AND the surrounding landscape that we need and love for wildlife and peace of mind? If not, it's more death by a thousand cuts. Keep the legislated promises. Preserve the best farmland. Feed our future.

Build our education centers to meet the needs of industry and our citizens. Address Oregon's lack of mental health care and affordable housing. Do the important work of bringing tech business back to this country without destroying farmland. In the face of climate change, water shortages, overpopulation, worldwide losses of soils and wildlife habitat, we must be mindful of preserving our best large lots of farmland. That's what we have along both sides of the Sunset Highway. Locating industry there would not be a winning move for the future.

Thank you!

Faun Hosey
Vice President, Save Helvetia