

Hello,

I am writing to provide public comment on your committee's search for industrial land and urge you not to select or consider rural, farmable land for this use. I am a farmer near North Plains and, like all the farmers in the area, would be adversely affected by the taking of more land from its intended purpose to make space for any high density industrial campus.

Farming in Oregon has allowed me to have my vegetable farm very near the folks who buy and eat our veggies - rather than endless sprawl our cities stop and farmland starts at the edge of the UBG. This means the food has to travel fewer miles but it also means a lot more people have a chance to see their farms in person and be connected to agriculture in a way that sustains farms and eaters. Continuing to carve up farmlands for individual, if compelling, interests will kill this form of farming near cities and move farmers ever farther from their customers. It also degrades the infrastructure needed to support farmers: two years ago we saw our last tractor dealership leave Helvetia after a subdivision went in across the street. The lot now sells supplies to developers and contractors. As the area caters more to city needs and, potentially, high tech needs, farmers will find themselves going farther afield and working harder to get equipment repaired. Rather than going across the fence to borrow a tool or get advice, we'll have neighbors who don't farm or understand what farms need.

Building high tech campuses, or any industrial use, on good high class farmland removes the potential for that land to produce food or other farm products forever. And it is not likely to stop at a few hundred acres of land for one campus - there's always another compelling reason to take a few hundred acres on the horizon. As these areas are built up, folks need homes, roads need to be widened and infrastructure needs to be built. The temptation will be to do all of that on the farmland that is here and should be in the rural reserve as our laws, and common sense, dictate. There is no more farmable land being created and, in Oregon, the best of it is in the same valleys our cities are in.

Please think about where our world is with climate, supply chains, and food security. Now think about what we need on farmland 50 years from now - farms or a 50 year old semiconductor factory? And fifty years after that? And 100 years after that?

Thank you for your consideration,
Aaron Nichols
Owner/manager of Stoneboat Farm