

Dear Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Bynum, and Members of the Joint Semiconductor Committee:

My name is Chris Hodges and my family has owned and farmed the 80 acres we now live on at 6770 NW Jackson School Rd since 1872. We primarily grow and sell organic blueberries. We have 10 acres in blueberry production and the remaining is leased to a neighboring farmer.

I want to share my views as someone that lives on, operates, and cultivates the land within the rural reserve areas of North Hillsboro. Myself and the vast majority of other farmers that live on and work these lands want to support the important work you are doing to grow the semiconductor industry in Oregon. Contrary to what you have heard, utilizing the lands we live and work on for that purpose will not negatively impact the agricultural industry. To address some of the common refrain from folks you've heard from to date:

1. Our lands are not conducive to high value crops because the land is not irrigated. As a result, most folks in this area utilize their land to produce grass seed. If there were high value crops that were readily grown here without irrigation, we would be growing them. In contrast, you will find a wide variety of high value crops on the other side McKay Creek, which is served by an irrigation district.
2. This fact is further supported by the long public process that occurred before the legislature designated these lands as rural reserve. Following the passage of SB 1011 in 2007, Metro, Washington County, City of Hillsboro and other agencies and stakeholders spent years in a public process that analyzed lands appropriate to support future growth and which lands should be protected as farmland. That process resulted in the land I and my neighbors farm being designated as urban reserves, and this decision was accepted by LCDC. Only a few years later did the legislature step in and undo these years of work.
3. As mentioned, our area is different than any other rural reserve as we are legislatively designated as such. Our land was vetted and planned as an urban, not rural reserve. That was the result of extensive public process and expert analysis, and Metro, county and city recommendations were all for urban reserve during the reserves process. Certainly, relevant to those recommendations is that we are dryland farming, without the services of an irrigation district. Another key factor is the proximity to existing North Hillsboro Industrial area and access to highway 26. In my family's case, we feel this reality on a daily basis. Our property is bound by NW Jackson School Rd to the west - a primary traffic arterial to/from Hillsboro via Hwy 26, Meek Rd to the North - a primary traffic arterial to/from Jackson East and the North Hillsboro Industrial Area, and the UGB to the south and east. The reality on the ground needs to be taken into account as well as the interests of the people who actually live and operate agricultural businesses here.
4. I do believe that our land use decisions need to balance the interests of farmers with the broader needs of people to have jobs and homes. In this specific case, however, where

nearly all farmers in our area are in support of urbanization, and because there are clear boundaries that provide separation between high value farmland and industrial uses, utilizing our lands to support semiconductor and advanced manufacturing is not a threat and does not weaken the agricultural economy. In fact, I would argue that the greater threat to agriculture is continuing to force growth westward into smaller and more rural communities that are surrounded by irrigated farmland that are actually producing high value crops. That is what is happening on the ground, and it is a direct result of the decision the 2014 legislature made.

I really urge all of you to not generalize a negative economic impact to agriculture or any trend implying a lack of protection for farmland over a very small percentage of highly conflicted dry land, primarily producing grass seed, nestled right on the border of the regions premiere industrial area. There is limited impact, and well-defined, logical, vetted, and approved boundaries to protect against future growth.

I welcome any conversation seeking to better understand the reality of farming in this area as well as the history behind the decisions that led to our area's current designation.

Sincerely,
Chris Hodges