



February 27, 2023

Dear Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Bynum, Co-Vice Chair Knopp, Co-Vice Chair Wallan and Members of the Committee,

I am Deanna Palm, President and CEO of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce. I am a native Oregonian and have spent nearly 40 years of my professional career advocating for businesses of all sizes and all industries in Oregon.

I participated in the Washington County process to designate the 50-year land supply between urban and rural uses. This was a long, thoughtful process; not without contention. The process resulted in areas designated as urban reserves and rural preserves. Once complete, property owners, who also participated in the process, were able to begin making plans for potential future industrial development. As Andy indicated, in 2014 a process that is still unclear to me and others reverted a large portion of urban reserves to rural reserves. Public processes and engagement are required for a reason and when the Legislature overrides such processes, public trust is shaken, and transparency questioned.

You have an opportunity to restore public trust by immediately bringing this land into the urban growth boundary and declaring it ready for development. This would put Oregon in contention in a very fast-paced process to compete for additional investment for a leading-edge research and development manufacturing facility. This area was only one of two identified as ready for the speed at which this opportunity is coming.

Hillsboro has, for decades, prepared for this moment. The Hillsboro 2020 Community Plan was launched in 2001 with expansive community engagement and input. The 2020 Community Plan was a reflection residents' desires for its community; how we want to grow and prosper. It is not, by design, a government led effort but a community-led effort that has lived and thrived for 23 years. Under the current 2035 Community Plan residents express a desire for well-paying jobs, homeownership opportunities and a thriving community where no one is left behind.

The opportunity before you to move forward with the most robust package you can design is not for our benefit but for the benefit of our children and our children's children.

I take my role as a community leader very serious and the obligation and responsibility to leave the table better set than before I arrived. I believe we all have that obligation and responsibility.

Will the next generation find a place where communities are thriving and small businesses growing due to a well-paid, well-educated population where they are driven to innovate and imagine even greater opportunities? Or, will we have left them with little more than remnants of a feast we enjoyed and didn't bother to replenish?

I grew up in Banks, Oregon on a 36-acre farm. I love Oregon and appreciate the benefits of our land use system and the unique balance we must strike between growth and preservation. Bringing this large tract of developable land into the UGB does not pose a threat to our existing land use system or the ecosystem of our farms and farmland.

Bold and courageous are two adjectives I would use to describe this Committee. These are difficult conversations to have in Oregon. The unique opportunity before us brings us to a crossroads and the decisions we make will have lasting impacts on future generations of Oregonians.

I'm grateful for your leadership and thank you for your time today.

Deanna Palm
President/CEO