

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Economic Development & Small Business
Public Testimony

Submitted: February 5, 2024

RE: HB4042- Industrial Lands Bill



Administrative
Offices

I support the passage of HB 4042 because assisting local governments in mitigating the risks of providing industrial-scale utilities through upfront financial assistance is a fundamental way that the State of Oregon can help to grow family-wage jobs across the state.

One quick example. In 2020 the greater Hermiston area was seriously considered for a \$500 million protein and butter plant by Darigold. This facility would have brought 250 new direct jobs at the plant to Hermiston along with more than 1,000 jobs in related industries throughout the supply chain.

No site is ever perfect for a prospective industry; and this speaks to the risk associated with taking a “build it and they will come,” approach. It is best practice to understand the infrastructure strengths and weaknesses of your site/community as-is and be prepared to address additional needs on a reasonable timeline when a legitimate prospect inquires.

This opportunity would have required nearly \$9 million in upgrades to the City of Hermiston’s wastewater system. Unfortunately, since the funding for that upgrade was unclear, the company opted to pursue the investment across the river in Pasco, Washington where it enjoyed a \$7.5 million appropriation from the Washington legislature.¹

HB 4042 will directly provide assistance to local communities to help the State of Oregon achieve it’s economic development goals.

Sincerely,



Mark Morgan, MPA
Assistant City Manager
Greater Hermiston Enterprise Zone

cc: Representative Greg Smith, District 57
Senator Bill Hansell, District 29

¹ “Darigold picks Pasco for \$500M Plant” *Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business* July 15, 2021
<https://www.tricitiesbusinessnews.com/articles/3370>