

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Business

From: Sharon Waterman, Oregon Century Ranch Family
Bandon, Oregon

Re: HB 4040A: Oppose the -6 Amendment

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bonham, and members of the Committee:

As longtime ranch and timber family south of Bandon, I have grave concerns about the -6 amendment to HB 4040A. In Coos County, we are seeing our prime high value agriculture land lost to government acquisitions for wetland restoration plus the purchase of agriculture land for the development of golf courses and their infrastructure. Nationwide and in Oregon, the loss of farms and farmlands is of great concern and this amendment will continue to perpetuate that loss especially in Coos County.

In October of 2022, an applicant (west of Highway 101) submitted a conditional use application (HB-22-001) to allow an 18-hole golf course in the non high-value portion of the Exclusive Farm Use land.* By the end of December of 2022, all testimony was transmitted to the Planning Commission and they reconvened January 5, 2023. The Planning Commission gave partial approval with conditions on the application that evening. It was determined that the area to the north, as defined in the record, would be considered High Value and the applicant would be prohibited from siting the golf course in this area to ensure compliance with the planning laws. A condition was placed that the golf course would be located outside of the High-Value Farm land to meet the criteria. A short time following the applicant's approval with conditions, the application was withdrawn by the applicant. There were concerns addressed as to the impacts of this non-farm use. One concern addressed was to the impact to the aquifer from wells to irrigate the golf course and the potential impacts to resident's wells and cranberry bogs water for irrigation. The land use process is there to ensure non-farm uses are compatible with the rural/agriculture community.

As legislators, you need to consider if it is appropriate to circumvent county planning by adding this -6 amendment to a bill that I understand has bi-partisan support. It is concerning to me that a single entity in a single county could potentially set a precedence for carve outs on high value farmland in a State Land Use system that has been in place since SB 100 was passed in 1973.

I encourage your opposition of the -6 amendment and just move forward with HB 4040A.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important issue to our agriculture industry and county land use planning.

[*Coos County Planning Commission Final Decision](#)