



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

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Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp and members of the committee:

My name is Alice Morrison and I am writing on behalf of Friends of Family Farmers (FoFF). FoFF represents over 1,600 farmers and ranchers across Oregon, many of whom live near the edges of UGBs because they focus on direct to consumer sales and provide the community service of bringing local food to people in urban areas. I am writing today to express strong opposition to HB 4026A.

We acknowledge that there is a housing crisis in Oregon. We also know there is a farmland loss crisis in Oregon and our country at large. There is no compelling evidence that UGB expansions lead to better housing outcomes, and we agree with [the assessments and analysis done by our partners at 1000 Friends of Oregon on this matter](#). Removing public input in the process of expanding UGBs silences the rural neighbors who contribute so much to city centers and beyond. We are so lucky to have the high quality agricultural soils that we do here in Oregon. By removing the referendum option and limiting public input we are not finding more land for housing, we are making it easier for developers to influence city councils to put subdivisions (not affordable housing) and permanently take our farmland out of commission. When this was part of HB 1537 we joined in coalition with many other groups to oppose this provision. We are not pleased to see it resurfacing here. We also want to echo the concerns of our friends experiencing this first hand in the community of North Plains:

- **The bill is probably unconstitutional.** This bill restricts the constitutional right to call a referendum. The state can only do that through a constitutional amendment, and not a statute.
- **The bill is retroactive to stop a measure that's already on the May ballot in North Plains.** Ten percent of North Plains voting residents signed a petition to get a referendum on their ballot. This bill would retroactively invalidate the legally exercised will of the people.
- **Referenda are hard to bring and rare, but important to be able to use for bad cases.** It's extremely difficult to get 10% of registered voters' signatures in 30 days, and referenda will only be used for the worst cases. In North Plains, there was limited public engagement and it would be the biggest UGB expansion by percentage in the state's history.
- **Referenda are not a threat to housing strategies inside UGBs,** since referenda can't be brought for localized decisions like siting a supermarket or zoning changes.

We urge you to oppose this measure and maintain the public processes needed to expand UGB. People in communities across the state want to have their say.

Thank you,

Alice Morrison
Co-Executive Director
Friends of Family Farmers
Junction City, OR