



PO Box 751  
Junction City, OR 97448  
503-581-7124 • [www.FriendsofFamilyFarmers.org](http://www.FriendsofFamilyFarmers.org)

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Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and Members of the committee:

My name is Alice Morrison and I am writing in opposition to SB 1586 including the -4 amendment on behalf of Friends of Family Farmers, a nonprofit that represents more than 1600 small and midsize, highly diversified, local market farmers in Oregon. We have no opinion of much of this bill, but **it is inappropriate for land use decisions to be included in SB 1586 as it was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue, not Natural Resources where land use decisions should be discussed.** There is land available within UGBs and the industries prioritized in this bill should work with available land and redevelop disused commercial/industrial land within current UGBs.

FoFF has a lot of active members in the area in question and I want to point out that the community is outright against this move. It was mentioned in oral testimony during the hearings that many public meetings occurred. At every single meeting with the people who live in this area organize, show up and staunchly oppose this land use decision. Proceeding anyway disregards the input of the community and the existing industries in these areas. This is an impasse. **The community does not want this to move forward and so the proponents of this plan are going to the legislature to circumvent these concerns.** This raises questions about the value of public engagement. If this proposal proceeds it sends the message that there is nothing that a community can do to stop its land use priorities and decisions being pushed aside by elected officials chasing corporate investment.

Converting this tract of land not only puts industrial development on some of the best soil in the world, but it also fragments the agricultural community and reduces small farm viability for existing producers by cutting them off from farm industry services, mechanics, seed cleaners, and feed mills in the Western part of Washington County. **Removing land from production in this creeping tide is strangling the small farms that remain in the community by breaking up the critical mass of farm operations needed to sustain these farm adjacent industries.** Without access to these services locally, these farmers have to drive their trucks and equipment to the services in Western Washington County, on roads that will now service corporate offices and data centers. Not only will this proposal remove land from future and expanding farm operations in the area, it will also make it harder for the operations still in production here.

Agriculture should not be disregarded here. **Ag continues to be the number 2 industry in the state generating \$42 Billion dollars in economic activity.** While the theoretical tech investment that is discussed in this bill could go many places in the state, high value agricultural soils are a finite and place based resource. We cannot recover them when they are paved over. **This is some of the most productive ground in our state and if this is not worth keeping in production, then the argument could be made for every bit of natural resource land we have.** The state needs to stop looking at agricultural land as an untapped resource awaiting development.

We heard in oral testimony in the hearing on Monday February 16, that an acre is not an acre, and this is even more true for farming than advanced manufacturing. **Agricultural soils are built over many years, they rely on careful stewardship and biological processes. The land in question is prime agricultural land, some of the best in the world. Class 1 and 2 soils are not something that should be overlooked and they are a key resource for the agricultural industry.** Why is it easier to use prime agricultural land for this development than other land that already has utility and road access? We are sacrificing an existing thriving agricultural region for the potential of future investment from unconfirmed advanced manufacturing on this site.

This also sets a dangerous precedent for land use in Oregon. As many others have testified, this land is currently in rural reserve. This is a part of Oregon's land use system and the reason that we have a thriving community food system. **The free market alone does not allow farmland to remain productive in direct proximity to population centers.** This is why other states have sprawling suburbs and farms far from where their product is consumed, whereas Oregon has more than 160 farmers markets, hundreds more farm stands, and direct connections between people growing food and those enjoying it. This is not an accident or simply a cultural difference, this is a result of our approach to agricultural land in planning.

While specific technologies move in cycles, we will always need to feed ourselves. We should not squander the resources to do so. **The type of development welcomed in this bill should be sited on existing developed land within UGB's, of which I am told there is over 10,000 acres ready to go around the state.** There is no need to waste our prime agricultural land when there are sites ready to go within Hillsboro's UGB granted during the 2014 grand bargain, and a 1,000 acre site in Wilsonville waiting for this type of project.

This bill sets a precedent that also drives farmland prices up through speculation. I have been told by farmers in Helvetia that their neighbors have received knocks on the door from speculative buyers who say they want to buy their EFU zoned land because they are confident there will be a "legislative solution" to the zoning for their industrial use. **By entertaining this you are not only putting the land in question out of reach for farmers, but also driving prices and competition for agricultural land right now.** Even continuing these discussions is harming our agricultural lands and makes it harder for the next generation of farmers to achieve the land security needed to feed us in the future. Farming will never be optional, we will always need to eat. We cannot disregard this life-sustaining industry and the natural resources it requires in favor of chasing the next boom. We will never be able to recover this land for agricultural use again. **Making these decisions to prioritize industries without natural resource use constraints that can be located anywhere the infrastructure is present, positions them over agriculture and disregards the contributions of our farmers and ranchers.**

My members are not against development or the existence of the high tech industry in Oregon, but proposals like this position tech against agriculture. We need to support this type of development within UGB's and redevelop under-utilized areas. Incentivizing these industries to create jobs and provide livelihoods to Oregonians is not the problem, doing so at the expense of high value farmland is. **We do not need to waste agricultural land and make our state less food secure in order to meet our other economic goals.**

Please vote no on SB 1586.

Thank you,



Alice Morrison  
Co-Executive Director  
Friends of Family Farmers