

Submitter: Robert Rose
On Behalf Of: my own behalf
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

Chair Broadman, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the committee:

My name is Robert Rose and I am submitting testimony on my own behalf as a concerned Oregon resident, voter, and taxpayer. I oppose SB 1586 and any amendment that would thereby expand the Hillsboro urban growth boundary (UGB), regardless of acreage, because it undermines the statewide land use planning program. SB 1586 with or without such amendment would negatively impact the agricultural economy of Washington County, and that of the entire State of Oregon. SB 1586 fails to take into account industrial lands already available within UGBs across the state, including Washington County, and also chips away at the established processes and procedures for UGB modification and expansion. These processes and procedures are key to Oregon's renowned Land Conservation and Development (LCDC) legislative program and have served Oregon by supporting its important agricultural base, enabling its farm-to-table economy, thus promoting family farms, tourism and Oregon's overall livability. SB 1586 would set a precedent and example demonstrating how special interests and self-interested politicians can ride roughshod over the will of the majority of Oregonians, which is to preserve a strong agricultural base while allowing for viable non-agricultural businesses and industries in a manner that sustains the livelihoods and well being of all of Oregon's residents. The particular rural reserves under attack by SB 1586 are high-value farmlands with excellent soil types. Farmers watching their destruction and demise without the due process and the adequate public input required by law would quickly lose confidence in Oregon's commitment to a viable agricultural base, and would be reluctant to invest and expand their farming operations. SB 1586 would create a patchwork of farmland in Washington County that would make it difficult to sustain viable farming operations at a reasonable cost. As portions of land go out of production, because they can be sold off profitably for non-farm uses, the remaining farmland and associated supportive businesses (farm equipment, farm mechanics, seed cleaners) would become more costly to operate and sustain.

The promise of family-wage jobs that SB 1586 are alleged to attract is elusive. There is no guarantee that these jobs would materialize, and certainly no guarantee that these jobs be plentiful and of the calibre to support family wages and livelihoods. What is certain, however, is that SB 1586 would render world-class soils ideal for agriculture unavailable for sustained farm use – forever!

I urge you to vote no on SB 1586 and stand up for the Oregon that the vast majority of its residents want. Thank you.