

Submitter: Anthony Rubeo

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

Janeen Sollman,

If you believe placing 10 or more new data centers on productive, renewable farmland in Hillsboro is the right move for our community, you are mistaken. The land west of Jackson School Road, stretching toward Glencoe Road and Highway 26, borders sensitive areas including McKay Creek. That creek supports coho salmon and extensive beaver habitat. It is part of a living ecosystem that includes deer, raccoons, otters, waterfowl, raptors, and countless other species. This is working farmland. It produces food. It supports grazing livestock. It sustains wildlife corridors. It filters water. It connects people to the land. Once it is covered in concrete, it does not come back.

The claim that these projects create long-term economic benefit deserves scrutiny. Construction jobs are temporary. Data centers, once operational, are highly automated. The permanent employment footprint is minimal compared to the irreversible loss of agricultural land and habitat.

This area also carries historic significance. Joseph Meek, an early sheriff and well-known figure in Oregon history, lived and is buried here. The land holds heritage value for many local families. Development decisions in historically and culturally sensitive areas should be handled with exceptional care and transparency.

Beyond heritage, there are environmental realities. McKay Creek supports salmon that are already vulnerable to warming water temperatures and habitat degradation. Western gray squirrels rely on shrinking oak habitat clusters. Continued fragmentation favors invasive eastern gray squirrels and further pressures native species.

There are also serious infrastructure questions that require public answers: water usage, grid strain, heat discharge, and battery storage safety. Large-scale lithium battery systems demand detailed emergency response planning and transparent risk assessment. These concerns are not hypothetical, and they should not be minimized. Many residents see this proposal as prioritizing industrial expansion over farmland preservation, wildlife protection, and the long-term character of our community. You are an elected representative. Your responsibility is to reflect and defend the interests of the people who live here.

A growing number of residents are asking you to reconsider the scale and placement of these projects, to evaluate cumulative environmental impact honestly, and to prioritize conservation of farmland and habitat.

This is not just about buildings. It is about heritage, ecosystems, water, wildlife, and the long-term identity of our community.

We are asking you to choose the community you represent.