

February 12, 2026

To President Wagner, Speaker Fahey, Majority Leader Jama, Majority Leader Bowman, Chief Sponsors, and Sponsors of Senate Bill 1586,

As local leaders and elected officials here in Washington County, we work with our constituents, local businesses, community-based organizations, and our agency staff on land use decisions every day. In Washington County, we are used to balancing the needs of a growing tech sector with the needs of our second-largest economic sector—agriculture. These decisions come with real trade-offs, and they require a process grounded in law, facts, professional planning, and meaningful public engagement.

That is why when we first learned about SB 1586, we understood this legislation to be an effort to begin a broader conversation—one that would take place over a longer legislative session and allow time for careful analysis and meaningful community input. Given the scope of the proposal and the limitations of a short legislative session, advancing it now instead risks bypassing important steps needed to fully understand the bill's potential impacts on Washington County's economic and agricultural engines.

Standard urban growth boundary (UGB) proposals come before the county because the commission is charged with balancing what is best for the county as a whole; not just the city that is growing, but its neighbors in the unincorporated areas and other jurisdictions across the county.

True economic development, true progress toward a more fair, more livable, more prosperous future means starting with the communities and starting with listening. Before we plan people's lives and cities, we need to know what people need to be financially successful and maintain their quality of life. We have to recognize the difference between a machine shop that takes up a corner of a block, provides skilled jobs, and supports the community, and a data center that sprawls over acres, provides few jobs, and exports its profits, like its data, to states and countries far away. We need to recognize the difference between appropriate development in rural towns like Banks or North Plains versus mid-sized towns like Forest Grove and Cornelius, and hubs like Hillsboro.

In all of these locations and across the county we have to assess what we already have and what we need. In Hillsboro, as Intel lays off workers and possibly abandons campuses, we must consider what new businesses need to relocate into these well planned and central areas. We must also consider what kinds of businesses will bring the diverse and resilient economic ecosystem that can survive downturns and thrive for everyone in the county.

Economic development isn't confined to the UGBs. Farming has remained our number two industry and our biggest source of green jobs. Farmers innovate to grow new crops and to better use their equipment, and they rise to the challenge of producing the food we eat while taking carbon and greenhouse gasses from the air to protect our climate. Unlike data centers—even if they are required to be attached to another use—we cannot relocate these farmers to old Intel campuses. Our farms thrive because we have world class soils—soils that deserve to be protected.

Lastly, and to return to the topic at hand—SB 1586—if we want real economic development to take root, we in government need to slow down, to listen to our communities, and we need to be accountable. We need to act strategically to be successful in building shared prosperity. Let's have meaningful engagement.

Let's not rush through a bill in a short session, bypassing local, community, and statewide collaborations that take years to get right, especially after trust has been repeatedly broken. So few of our residents have been engaged and many questions remain unanswered. Let's interrogate the assumptions that led to the failed economic development of the last decade, rather than doubling down on an approach that values costly sprawl over farmland, and corporations over communities. We have to do better in the decades to come. We have to do better to build a more resilient community in the face of climate change and economic downturns. We have to do better for a county that takes care of its residents and its schools. We have to do better than this for Washington County.

Sincerely,

Olivia Alcaire, Hillsboro City Councilor

Bridget Brooks, MSW, Tualatin City Councilor

Tammy Carpenter, Beaverton school board member

Farrah Chaichi, State Representative

Nafisa Fai, Washington County Commissioner

Nadia Hasan, Beaverton City Councilor

James Just, Washington County Planning Commissioner

Deborah Lockwood, former Chair, Washington County Planning Commission, 2021-2025

Mary Manseau, CPO7 Co-Chair and former Washington County Planning Commissioner

Susan McLain, State Representative

Barbie Minor, Board Director, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District

Dean Moberg, Director, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District

Gayle Nachtigal, retired judge

Mary Nolan, Metro Councilor

Linda Peters, former Washington County Commissioner & Board Chair

Jeffrey Petrillo, Former Washington County Planning Commissioner

Valerie Pratt, Tualatin City Council President

Terri Preeg Riggsby, Zone 5 Director, West Multnomah SWCD

Gerritt Rosenthal, Metro Councilor

Kipperlyn Sinclair, Hillsboro City Councilor

Elaine Stewart, Director, Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District