

Submitter: Faun Hosey
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

SAVE HELVETIA
13260 NW Bishop Rd
Hillsboro, OR 97124
February 2026

Advancing policies, leaders and actions that
protect Helvetia's treasured resources.

To: Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

Chair Broadman and members of the Committee,

As president of the non-profit group Save Helvetia, rooted in Fertile Farmland, I ask you to oppose SB 1586, though we WOULD support an amendment stripping out Sections 19-21.

We need to build and respect the vitality of our agricultural economic sector.

Urban areas CAN grow without sprawling onto farmland. In doing so, our communities are served more efficiently and our prime farmland can continue to be used for its highest and best purpose: farming any of the extremely wide range of crops that yield more highly in flatlands of the Tualatin and Willamette Valleys than most places in the world.

When the urban edge grows, some conflicts make farming more difficult, and need resolution. For one thing, farmers want to expand their businesses. But: land speculation flourishes, raising prices per acre in multiples as high as 50, making it difficult to find affordable land. Agriculture needs LAND to grow.

I have a document detailing how urban-style "improvements" to rural roads – such as curbs or deep ditches which are hazardous when a farmer tries to pull her giant tractor to the side for traffic. Construction on adjoining property can damage a farmer's investment in drainage tile, taking time and expense to repair. I have another document explaining the various misconceptions of a farmer's "right to farm" – such as the recent 911 call when the noise of a harvester on the day of a child's birthday party, actually led to police having to intervene. Similar complaints come from commercial or some high tech neighbors adjacent to agriculture.

You've heard testimony that Oregon and Washington County have Best-in-the-World assets: top tier soils, irrigated or not, and a favorable climate. Because of these, farming is a thriving, vital, economic driver, making our economic asset portfolio more diversified, and our surroundings more attractive.

We need leaders to develop strategies that build our healthy, vibrant, agricultural economy. Not get in the way. And NOT destroy it.

Although SB 1586 is presented as a prosperity bill, it's really another land grab effort that removes 50-yr protection on the highest quality, largest tract of protected, Class 1 and 2 prime farmland in the region.

The Bill is a Trojan Horse – it appears to be a beautiful gift for a prosperous future – but in truth, it delivers the ruin of our land and reveals the greed of our people. We've heard these promises before – that semiconductor manufacturing was about to arrive and we'd better get ready! The phantom promise of the fabled Project Azalea (together with a spanking from our Court of Appeals) inspired the Legislature to hurriedly respond with the gift of a 50-year land supply of 2400 acres added directly into Hillsboro's UGB. Just 12 years ago! A tour of the north Hillsboro industrial area today, reveals the land being given to warehouses, data centers, substations, and battery energy storage stations. The thousands of new jobs have only been temporary construction jobs. Meanwhile, we've endured thousands of job layoffs by Intel. High tech looks like an unsustainable boom and bust existence. The math isn't mathing.

Even if the growth promises were true, the land is not needed for industry. Land Use planning in the Portland Metro region is managed in collaboration with other counties and cities to seek and respond to economic balance. Far more than 1000 acres are currently available for industry in our region. There's no good rationale for removing the 50-year protection from a large tract of prime farmland that's key to continuing the success of farming in western Washington County.

The #2 economic supply chain is weakened each time acreage is lost to farming.