

Friends of French Prairie

Friends of French Prairie
is an Oregon non-profit corporation

PO Box 403 | Donald, Oregon 97020 | www.friendsoffrenchprairie.org



April 8, 2019

To: Joint Transportation Committee

Re: SB 413

Greetings;

I write on behalf of Friends of French Prairie, a land use advocacy organization in the north Willamette Valley, focusing on French Prairie, Oregon's historic and agricultural heartland.

This letter is to document our opposition to SB 413, which authorizes cities and counties to form a special taxing and revenue district to finance and create limited access tollways.

It should be noted that this bill is substantially, if not entirely, the same as HB 3231 put forward by then-Representative Vial in the last Legislative session. That bill met with overwhelming opposition, and that opposition and the reasons behind it have not changed.

This bill is designed to enable a westside bypass around Metro Portland and it would take huge swaths of prime EFU farmland and thus negatively impact Oregon agriculture.

Marion County residents oppose any type of bypass or tollway across French Prairie as evidenced by multiple formal statements of opposition by the Marion County Board of Commissioners in the past fifteen years.

SB 413 would negatively impact the rural reserves, established by Metro and designed to protect farm land from urbanization, and allow paving across the most resource-rich areas in the state, including the Tualatin Valley and French Prairie.

This bill would allow creation of tollway districts *anywhere in the state*, creating another layer of transportation planning in an attempt to get around Oregon's current land use and transportation planning system. While promulgating such a law will have state-wide

implications, perhaps more importantly is this bill's authorizing districts to override designations of rural reserves.

As an organization that has been actively engaged in Metro's Urban/Rural Reserve process for almost a decade, we understand just how important these designations are to define areas for urbanization and development, and to protect the best farm and forest lands from development for the coming forty to fifty years.

Please oppose this bill and do not advance it out of committee.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Benjamin D Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light grey rectangular background.

Benjamin D Williams

Friends of French Prairie