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May 13, 2019

House Committee on Revenue  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Opposition to HB 2456** - Allows counties to rezone lands within Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region from exclusive farm use to residential uses.

Dear Chair Nathanson and Members of the House Revenue Committee:

Friends of Marion County is an independent 501(c)(3) farmland protection organization founded in 1998. Our mission is to protect farm and forestland, parks, and open space.

**Friends of Marion County is opposed to HB 2456.** This bill has already had a hearing in HAGLU. We hope it goes no further and dies.

#### 1. EOBEDB - PPT (Presentation Error)

While reviewing the 2/27/19 PPT presentation by the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board, one can easily see that the comparisons of population per sq. mi. are exaggerated. More than 80% of the Malheur County Land Area is owned and managed by the Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The comparisons of the ratios of population to land mass are inaccurate and should be calculated differently. Our approximate calculations show that Malheur County Population Per Square Mile should be three times greater, or 10 persons/sq. mi. of non-Federally owned land.

#### 2. EOBEDB - PPT (Faulty Justification)

“We live in the shadow of Idaho’s booming growth and are at a tremendous disadvantage, made possible in large part by the relatively lax policies and regulations espoused in that state.”

Our stance: We do not want to fall victim to State of Idaho land use policies.

#### 3. Our Land Use Laws Need Protection

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HB 2456 sets a dangerous precedent and will lead to more counties requesting similar treatment. When will the types and numbers of exceptions end?

We hope this letter provides an important assessment of the proposal and that the Legislature will consider the importance of protecting EFU land from this kind of use. We hope you will make the wise decision to reject HB 2456.

Thank you for listening.

Roger Kaye, President  
Friends of Marion County  
P.O. Box 3274  
Salem, OR 97302  
(503)743-4567  
rkaye2@gmail.com

c: Rep. Brian Clem, HAGLU Chair