Hello,

I am Jim Emerson, a private citizen offering some observations about our collective future.
The presentation about Industrial Lands and economic development, held at Ponzi Vinyards on December 6th, 2022, was of high interest to me as an area resident for over 50 years.
I was one of several attendees voicing concerns about water supply at that meeting, and I am inspired to write a bit more, after reading a December 12th article by Mike Rogoway in The Oregonian stating that incoming Governor Kotek suggests spending "as much as 200 to 300 million dollars in pursuit of..." some of the Federal billions expected to stimulate a domestic computer-chip industry expansion.

1. Every urban area relies on its hinterland for water, and on a global supply network for food. Oregon, including the Portland metro region, is already experiencing long-term summer drought, which is expected to intensify. Why would we invite a water-intensive industry to expand, when shortages already occur? And why would we irreversibly destroy even more of some of the finest agricultural land in the world, when agricultural production is already experiencing major stresses worldwide - including immediately to our south in California? Our successors may view our decisions to pave over farmland as insanity.

2. The 500 industrial acres said to be necessary for a major chip plant (counting all the access roads and vast parking lots?) are just a start. For every acre of new industry, I estimate that there follow within a decade 3 acres of expanded commercial and residential land conversions nearby, if the industrial land is a "greenfield" expansion. We could lose 3 square miles of fine farmland on the basis of one big chip plant.

3. If we spend in pursuit of this industrial goal, we may be chasing a mirage. There are many other areas of the USA with infrastructure, people, unused industrial land, and a more reliable (as projected) water supply, not to mention lack of earthquake risk, plus the desperation stemming from decades of industrial decline. Ohio, Michigan, New York's Mohawk Valley cities, and aggressive proposals from the South and Southwest may all have more success in luring a chip plant than an Oregon proposal. To spend hundreds of millions of dollars in our small-population state, on a tenuous outcome which also carries some big negative consequences, strikes me as poor judgment. Oregonians do not have to respond to the siren song of "money, development, jobs" - which every business touts. The chip manufacturing business may be a different technology in 20 years. It may be centered in Nigeria in 50 years. Demography and climate underly our changes. We need to consider what our state is, and what the future will need. We know we will still need to eat - and we have the good farmland, at our doorstep.

4. If Oregon really has 200 to 300 million dollars to spend on a bet for the future, we could use it right here, right now, to protect, intensify, and expand our existing agricultural businesses. High land prices, commodity price fluctuations, and labor inequities make it nearly impossible for young people (who are not part of an existing farm family) to begin.
Yet there are many young people desperate to work for the sustainable, real world instead of the virtual world which happens to be in economic flower at the moment. What if we spent those hundreds of millions of dollars to provide land, equipment, and training to a large cohort of people who could advance Willamette/Tualatin Valley agriculture to be a primary provider of food and fiber crops for Oregon, and (as California dries and Florida submerges) the country?

5. Oregon's motto is "Alis volat propriis"   - "She flies with her own wings."

I hope we will decide to do so, and not rely so much on corporate wings based elsewhere in the world. As we have seen over and over again, corporate wings have neither the long-term health of any location, nor the health of the future, in mind.

Thank you for your consideration,

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