

Submitter: Walt Mintkeski

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB70

I am opposed to SB70, sponsored by Sen. Findley, because it changes the original definition of "high value" farmland in SB 16, passed in 2021, to open up even more agricultural lands to residential development. SB 16 opened up over 200 acres of exclusive farm use (EFU) land in the Eastern Oregon Border Region, located in Malheur County, to be rezoned to allow up to 100 homes on 2-acre lots, within certain parameters.

SB16 says that the houses could not be sited on high value farmland, using the more expansive definition based primarily on soils classified as Class I or II, prime or unique farmland, as well as lands that grow or can grow high value crops (like wine grapes) and lands related to irrigation, and it specifically includes lands in designated viticultural areas, including the "Snake River Valley viticultural area."

SB70 would change that definition to a narrower definition based just on soils classified as Class I or II, prime or unique farmland. Therefore, SB 70 opens up to development not only more Exclusive Farm Use land, but EFU land which is still "high value."

Please oppose SB70 as currently written.