



#### OFFICERS

Roger Kaye  
President

Richard van Pelt  
Secretary

Susan Watkins  
Treasurer

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Laurel Hines  
Carla Mikkelson  
Linda Peterson  
Kasia Quillinan

February 7, 2023

Senate Committee on Natural Resources  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

#### **RE: Vote “NO” on SB 70 – Housing on High-Value Farmland**

**Amends definition of high-value farmlands for residential rezoning of lands within Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region**

#### **To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources**

Dear: Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod and Members of the Committee

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

There are so many reasons the committee should reject this proposal and I will list just a few here.

1. SB 16 passed the legislature in 2021 with the understanding that the bill protects high-value farmland. Proponents claim legislative support however the vote taken was actually very close. Senate Vote AYE = 16 NAY = 12, House Vote AYE = 32 NAY = 27.

2. We have come to understand from the proponents that SB 70 now “fixes” SB 16 to permit housing on high-value farmland since the farmland proposed for housing is available in areas that are not considered appealable to developers. The proponents call this high-value farmland “nonviable”.

3. SB 70 does not “fix” a problem but expands the locations available for housing on farmland that should be protected, i.e., viticultural areas, irrigation districts, etc.

4. The 2021 legislature narrowly voted for SB16 with the understanding that only “scrub land” unsuitable for farming would be affected.

5. So why are the proponents supporting SB 70? The answer is clearly that SB 70 gives developers more high-value farmland on which to build unaffordable housing.

I hope this letter provides an important view of the proposal and that the Senate Committee on Natural Resources should reject this measure.

Thank you for listening.

Roger Kaye, President  
503-743-4567  
rkaye2@gmail.com