

Dear Co-Chairs Bynum, Sollman and members of the committee,

For the record, I'm Victoria Demchak. I work at the Oregon Health Authority and am testifying today as a private citizen. I live in Hillsboro Oregon and my husband co-owns and operates a vegetable farm in Helvetia.

I've had the opportunity to live in the Portland area for most of my life. I've appreciated the protections the land use system provided to me and others to have access to clean air, water, recreation and direct access to agriculture. I left Oregon to study city planning at Cornell University and found myself engaging there with how Oregon's uniqueness was not entirely natural, but that Oregon had stewarded the state's livability through careful land use and development planning, including heralded multiuse developments such as Orenco Station in Hillsboro and protecting farmland near cities.

I chose to raise my children here in Oregon because of the access to farms and forests and for the choices that Oregon has made about sustainable placemaking.

I am in favor of seeking the opportunities the CHIPS Act offers and appreciate the holistic focus on a full package of state support for workforce investments, land development and support and a focus on a resilient system of interdependent tech firms.

However, sections 10 and 11 include policy proposals that have concrete negative impacts on thoughtful development and land use system Oregon created. I have three main points and a question I want to raise to the committee today regarding these sections.

1- This weakens previous and current public processes in favor of directing industrial and commercial development to some of the highest quality farmland in Oregon and the world.

Oregon has a unique expertise in seed growing and agglomeration fruit/ vegetable production. This farmland under discussion by the committee has enormous potential now and in the future to grow higher value crops than it has been growing. As temperatures rise and water grows more difficult to obtain for Oregon and for other agricultural states, such as California, Oregon will increase its strategic advantage as a state that grows high value agricultural crops.

Oregon's land use system forecasted that conflict between the areas that are easy to settle and build and those that are valuable for farmland. We should respect public processes that have worked to site and develop future industrial investments for inclusion within UGB and ask that cities that should be subject to wider public processes for their UGB decisions, such as North Plains, be included.

2 - Our children need connections to the land for their future; this bill diminishes the ability for our children to be farmers.

I have two children who are being raised on a farm. Both are interested in farming as work that creates food and work that's a way of demonstrating care, generosity and community while building cool stuff (that's my son). Farming has been an opportunity to build skills, self-efficacy and autonomy for these children and others who visit farms with their families or with their school. Our farm has been a way for school children from across the Portland region to see a farm. Frequently, it's their first opportunity to visit a farm and see food growing. Losing farmland will decrease these opportunities for my children and many others to interact with, and possibly become, farmers.

3 - Planning requires time and engagement. The fast processes here limit that.

Planning for a city or a region requires engagement with users and those who are dependent on those resources. Farmers are perhaps a community that is harder to see and can be spread out, but nevertheless, are here and need to be part of public processes. Bills like this invite comment by those who are connected and know who to speak to but put barriers between those most negatively affected and those making life and state changing decisions.

And my question for you:

How can we consider existing sites first, to respect those development and engagement processes? And could you consider sites that would share these jobs within cities across the state to support equitable workforce development and lift all Oregon cities?

I hope you can use the information and wisdom available to you to look for solutions that do not pit farming against manufacturing. We have more options to site chip manufacturers and suppliers beyond the extraordinary measures discussed.

Thank you for your time today,
Victoria Demchak, Hillsboro OR