

TO: Joint Committee on Semiconductors
RE: Oppose SB4

MESSAGE: I am writing to oppose SB4 as it is currently written. I am extremely concerned about any bill that would allow government officials to make large changes to our community without needing community approval to make those changes happen. The provision in SB4 that allows for the Governor to amend Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) whenever they would like is EXTREMELY concerning to me. This is a power that belongs to members of the community to decide how they want their community to be amended, not for someone in Salem with no direct connection/understanding of how an area operates to make a decision that would impact our lives for a few corporate dollars.

I am a third generation resident of my home in the North Plains/Helvatia area. My grandparents purchased their land off of Mason Hill Road in the 50s through a newspaper advertisement with the desire to live outside of the city but still close enough for work (my late grandfather was a dentist). My father grew up here, doing things such as raising cows for meat, selling Christmas trees, and a lot of the land being left forested for selective timber harvests. As a child I spent countless hours outside here and grew up loving all the farms nearby, and as an adult my husband and I chose to live here so that our own children can be raised in places like this. I am fearful for my community and the neighboring city of Hillsboro because I know that the Hillsboro City Government would rather annex our land for big tech projects than develop land within their UGB. There are thousands of acres in Hillsboro and nearby cities that can be used for tech development before needing to take over actively used farmland.

Up until 2016/2017 agriculture was the largest industry. Oregon is a state well known for our agricultural products, as well as a culture of "locally grown" for our produce. Portland is one of the few metro areas where realistically someone could live entirely off of local produce, dairy, and meat products that come from within a two hour drive of the city. It is something I love, in that much of what my own household consumes comes from our neighbors. Why would we want to lose that culture and heritage without input from the community?

Lastly, who really stands to benefit from these changes? A few deep pockets at tech companies? Certainly not us within the communities staring these changes in the face. Recent news investigations have shown that the return from all of the tax breaks for these tech giants isn't really what we (the public) were sold it would be, and in many cases of data centers and warehouses (the same ones Hillsboro wants to populate Helvatia with) the state is losing money on the tax incentives given. Why would we continue down that path by taking away our farmland, where our food is grown and raised, to just lose it to a data center that only employs 4 people? Why would we do that change for a semiconductor plant? Why would we pass a bill that allows that change to happen with zero regard for the community it displaces?

I ask that my opposition be on the record and that you all also drop SB4 and the UGB provision.

Kindly,
Emily Waldron