

Submitter: Cameron La Follette
On Behalf Of: Oregon Coast Alliance
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business
Measure: HB4040

Dear Committee,

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is an Oregon nonprofit whose mission is to protect coastal natural resources and work with coastal residents to enhance community livability. ORCA opposes HB 4040 because of the proposed amendment inserted in the A-engrossed version, which would allow a specific parcel inside the Bandon Dunes golf resort to be developed as a golf course on land designated High Value Farmland (HVF). The land was once a working cranberry farm, and as it had been farmed, Michael Keiser presumably knew of its designation when he purchased the property. HVF is a tightly crafted statute focused on protecting the special areas where specified high-value crops are grown, one of which is cranberries. It is the only farm designation which does not allow golf courses. ORCA opposes individual exceptions to the land use laws such as this one, because they inevitably lead to others wanting a similar exception. Furthermore, every little exception like this has local impacts on the farming landscape, and on the overall viability of the land use laws as a set of requirements all landowners must comply with. This amendment, if passed, would have no discernible effect on economic development in Coos County, as there are at least five golf courses at Bandon Dunes already; another will make very little if any difference. It is true that much of the unimproved land in this part of Coos County can become infested with the highly flammable gorse; but gorse removal can occur whether or not the parcel is protected as HVF for farm purposes.

Please reject this proposed amendment to HB 4040, or reject the bill if the amendment remains in place.

Thank you.

Cameron La Follette
Executive Director
Oregon CoastAlliance