

Submitter: Joshua Maxson  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3971  
Testimony Opposing House Bill 3971

My name is Josh Maxson. I am in strong opposition to House Bill 3971.

This bill poses a direct threat to local control, public participation, and environmental safeguards. It would override zoning laws and land use plans that communities like mine have spent years developing with public input and careful consideration.

One of the most alarming aspects of this bill is that it requires the approval of certain facility applications without public hearings or community input. That means residents, small businesses, and local governments would have no voice in projects that could have lasting impacts on health, safety, property values, and the environment.

HB 3971 also bypasses essential environmental review processes and limits appeal rights. These reviews exist for a reason — to ensure projects are responsibly sited and thoroughly evaluated. Stripping those protections puts our communities and ecosystems at risk.

The bill's broad siting language encourages poor placement of industrial facilities. A real example of this is the Clean Lane/IMERF project in Lane County. It's proposed in a wetland that floods nearly every year and is within close proximity to a school. Despite the area's zoning prohibiting waste-related development under Lane County's "Great Plan," which was adopted over a decade ago, the County is still trying to move this project forward.

In fact, the Land Use Hearings Official denied the application — correctly — based on existing zoning. Yet, the Board of Commissioners is now trying to bypass that decision, even in the face of overwhelming public opposition. More than 1,600 residents have signed a petition opposing the project. Every business along Highway 99 near the site is against it. And yet, their voices may no longer matter if HB 3971 passes.

There are also serious traffic safety concerns. The proposed site is accessed from a 55 mph highway, with no turn lanes. Trucks would enter a small residential road that turns to gravel. Just a few weeks ago, a fatal crash occurred only a block away, involving a log truck making a similar turn.

Finally, I want to highlight the dangerous use of the "emergency clause" in this bill. There is no legitimate emergency here. Using that clause to rush this legislation through is an abuse of process and denies both lawmakers and the public the opportunity for proper debate and review.

In closing, I urge you to consider what this bill truly does: it silences communities, removes oversight, and fast-tracks industrial projects with minimal accountability.

Please vote NO on House Bill 3971. Thank you for your time and for listening to the voices of the people you represent.