

Submitter: Marie Bowers
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3971
Chair Bowman, Vice-Chair Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marie Bowers and my family has been farming in the Goshen area for nearly 75 years and I am writing to urge you to oppose HB 3971.

This bill would allow a prohibited garbage processing and gas generation facility in Lane County to move forward, despite it being explicitly denied under existing land use laws and rejected by a County hearings officer. The bill does not simply authorize a project—it undermines the foundation of Oregon’s land use system.

This facility would:

- Fill 11 acres of wetlands and be built on land that floods with even minimal rainfall.
- Be located in a designated floodplain, with no FEMA mapping, near a tributary of the Willamette River.
- Be just 400 feet from a school serving disadvantaged youth, raising serious public health and environmental justice concerns.

HB 3971 blatantly contradicts the Goshen GREAT Plan, a carefully developed and community-endorsed land use strategy. That plan explicitly prohibits waste-related uses near the Short Mountain Landfill to protect the environment and local residents. To override that plan is to invalidate years of public input and thoughtful planning.

Moreover, the bill rewards poor governance. A narrow 3-2 majority of Lane County Commissioners irresponsibly committed public funds to this project, despite knowing it violated local zoning. Now they seek a legislative bailout to fix their mistake. HB 3971 sets a dangerous precedent: local governments can skip due diligence, violate land use laws, and simply ask the Legislature to clean up after them.

Finally, HB 3971 penalizes public participation. It erodes transparency and trust by granting one-way attorney fees in favor of the County or its private contractor, chilling community engagement and silencing opposition.

This bill is bad policy. It circumvents land use laws, compromises environmental protections, threatens community health, and opens the door to future abuses across Oregon. I respectfully ask you to vote NO on HB 3971.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Sincerely,

Marie Bowers