

Submitter: Emily Dent

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

Chair Broadman, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the committee,

My name is Emily Dent and I am a resident of Scholls, Oregon, just outside of Hillsboro. Additionally, I am also an employee of a local food bank and well in tune with our state's agricultural and food systems. I

oppose SB 1586 and any amendments that would still expand the Hillsboro UGB, regardless of

acreage, because it undermines the statewide land use planning program, threatens the

agricultural economy in Washington County, and fails to take into account industrial land

available within urban growth boundaries across the state.

These rural reserves in Washington County have a long history, but in 2014 the legislature

made a commitment that these 1,700 acres would be protected until at least 2065.

This 50-year

promise is to provide landowners with the confidence they need to invest in their farming

operation because they don't have to worry about their land being rezoned and urbanized right

after investing their time and money into it. Instead, nearly every year the legislature has

proposed to bring this land into Hillsboro's UGB, for one use or another. This does not provide

confidence, but rather encourages speculative landholding that keeps this high-value farmland

out of the hands of people who really do want to farm.

SB 1586 will fracture the agricultural economy in Washington County. It will make it harder for

farmers to travel between fields that would become separated by this rezoned land. It will

continue to shut down tractor stores, mechanics, and seed cleaners, further disrupting the

agricultural supply chain. It will drive up farmland costs and make it harder for new farmers to

access land and existing farmers to expand their operations. Agriculture is the second largest

economic industry in the state, and is absolutely dependent on access to top tier soils. Industrial

development does not need to be located on the world's best soil.

As climate change continues to threaten our agricultural industry and disrupt our food supply, we should not be investing in industrial development that will continue to stress our already strained natural resources. High tech industries strain our power grids, waste our water, and do not pay their fair share in taxes to support our economies. Agriculture is essential to life, data centers are not.

Lastly, SB 1586 fails to take into account geographic equity and the thousands of acres of

industrial land already available within UGBs across the state. Oregon needs a statewide approach to

economic development, so all Oregonians can thrive. How will someone in Southern or Central

Oregon benefit from the state doubling down on investments in Hillsboro? Oregon also needs a

statewide industrial lands inventory, so we can all operate off the same information about where

there is available land and how much there is, rather than relying on an incomplete report.

For these reasons and more, I ask that you vote no on SB 1586 and work to rebuild trust with

the Hillsboro community. Thank you.