

Submitter: Weldon Buxton  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

## STEALING FROM FUTURE GENERATIONS

We are fortunate that Oregon is endowed with a limited amount of prime agricultural land like the Tualatin Plain. Our state also has a much greater amount of land that has marginal to very little value as agricultural land. I am afraid that taking prime agricultural land as SB 1586 does for industrial and city expansion is simply stealing an irreplaceable resource from future generations. Once such prime land is covered up by industrial or city infrastructure it cannot ever be retrieved for agricultural use even if the infrastructure were to be removed. When we build infrastructure on land the first step is to remove or destroy the top soil after which the land has no agricultural value. Only nature can create prime agricultural soil and that process is measured on a scale of millions of years. But man can destroy fine soil at the speed that a bulldozer crawls.

We do have much land in Oregon on which we could allow development with minimal loss of future agricultural production potential. I do understand that development on this type of land is more difficult and costly than on prime agricultural land but maybe that is a price that we should pay for the benefit of future generations. One such area that I know of since I lived within it for 25 years is the area from the edge of Oregon City South along the East side of the Willamette River to the Molalla River. It's an area of heavy clay soil suitable for growing Christmas trees, timber and livestock pasture but not intensive agriculture. Developers would hate it so pushing development to such an area would generate little or no political campaign contributions but our descendants might praise us.

I do know a bit about agriculture and soil as I grew up on a farm in Clackamas County and for fourteen years I was involved in the operation of that farm. The farm was on what is now recognized as very marginal agricultural land. Dad was just a farmer but a quite successful farmer. He was a wise man, I think wiser than many. He clearly recognized the value of prime agricultural land. I have a vivid memory of a conversation with Dad while working on that farm during the summer of 1958 when I was age 17. Dad said "Son you have talked about being a farmer and about working in manufacturing, you need to decide which you want to do". I replied "gee dad I have a year of high school left why do I need to decide now"? Dad said "because if you want to farm we need

to sell this ol' rock bottom place and go buy a large parcel of prime farm land". He continued "if you want to farm you won't make it on this place but if you don't want to farm I will be fine right here the rest of my time". He was so right. Soil is critical, it is

limited. My decision was manufacturing.

Oh where is Tom Lawson McCall, when we need him to defend his vision?

SB 1586 should die.