

Submitter: Ben Asher
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,

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.

Lastly, SB 1586 fails to take into account geographic equity and the thousands of acres of industrial land 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 help develop a statewide system for economic development that utilizes existing lands within urban

growth boundaries. Thank you.