

Submitter: Elisabeth Blizzard

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

Chair Broadman, Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 1586.

My name is Meeky Blizzard,.I am a resident of Washington County since 1978 and have been an advocate for Oregon's Land Use System for many years. Living in unincorporated Washington County for nearly 50 years, I have watched the continued encroachment of urban uses on prime farmland. While I recognize the need to provide all Oregonians with stable housing and a strong economy, adding rural reserves north of Hillsboro to the UGB for high-tech and manufacturing does nothing to further either of these objectives.

- The metropolitan Portland area has sufficient land within the UGB to for industrial uses, including data centers. There is absolutely no need to sacrifice valuable prime farmland to accommodate additional data centers.

- Oregon does not currently have an inventory of industrial lands. How then can we justify adding Rural Reserves – valuable farmland – to our urban areas if we don't know that we actually need it?

- Data centers provide few jobs and do not appreciably add to tax revenue. If indeed our urban areas need more room to grow, we should be focused on urban uses that provide increased employment opportunities, critical services and much needed housing.

- The Rural Reserves designation was created with a 50-year horizon. Discarding that designation undermines the basis for Oregon's Land Use Planning system – especially when there has been no public process to inform and engage business owners, farmers and residents who have faithfully been part of this decades-long system.

- Land owners in the Rural Reserves north of Hillsboro have attempted to bring these lands into the UGB for decades, taking every opportunity to bypass our land use system for their own benefit. Meanwhile, farmers in this area continue to be threatened with the irreplaceable loss of this important resource.

- Finally, who is going to bear the cost of using land outside the UGB for additional data centers? Other states are finding that using tax dollars to incentivize low-job

industries depletes water supplies and increases energy costs, most of which are born by existing businesses and residents, hurting rather than helping local economies. In fact, the City of Hillsboro's own figures calculates that they won't break even for 34 years! Is this any way to address our current budget crisis?

- Moving this land into the UGB undermines Oregon's struggling agricultural economic sector by allowing development on some of the richest Class 1 Soils in the world. High tech manufacturing in its many forms, will come and go, but our Class 1 Soils are irreplaceable. We will always need to eat.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 1586.

Sincerely,  
Elisabeth (Meeky) Blizzard