



# CLACKAMAS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

*Celebrating 50 Years of Conservation*

February 13, 2025

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

**RE: Opposition to SB 1586**

The Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) objects to SB 1586 which would remove 1,700 acres of land from their protected status as agricultural lands and allow them to be moved inside Hillsboro's urban growth boundary (UGB) and become industrialized through a legislative "super-siting" process.

Clackamas SWCD is a local government, a special district under Oregon law with elected officials, who serve all the people of our county by providing technical assistance for both rural and urban projects. We work in partnerships with state and federal agencies and other local governments in collaboration to protect land, water and other natural resources, including providing assistance in restoration of streams, habitat, and wetlands that benefit the public and support wildlife.

Of particular concern is that 1,300 of the 1,700 acres area zoned "**rural reserves**" under Washington County and Metro plans and earlier Oregon legislation. Rural reserves are designated to be maintained in protection until 2065 or later. Our district participated in the Clackamas County Planning process that determined the balance between rural resource lands and urban development lands. Rural reserves were a vital part of the final decision enabling equitably completing the zoning plan, providing support to balance the long-term protection of high-value farmland with economic development in a highly transparent public process.

If this legislation is passed, 1700 acres of farmland with some of the world's best farmland, important stream tributaries, and high value conservation wetland and riparian habitat will be fragmented and permanently lost to the agriculture industry that allows our farmers to provide food and fiber for Oregonians, supporting the state's valuable agriculture economy as well as our export trade for the state.

While SB 1586 is focused on Washington County, our concern is that approval of one legislative "super-siting" process will set a precedent and similar actions will be attempted in other areas of the state putting our rural reserves at risk while circumventing the state land use planning system.

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We don't need a short cut around our system that disadvantages our farm and forest land and our natural resources.

The intent is to rush through the bill in a short 35-day session without the accompanying analysis and local public process that allows community engagement and review by state agencies. There are existing policies in place to expand urban growth. Super-siting circumvents those procedures. Further, there is no demonstration of the need to expand the industrial complex in this area and no analysis of impacts on the protected resource lands that provide a base for farming in Washington County. Even in the legislative session this year amendments to the bill were not made available before the posting of the hearing, which just occurred this week. This is contrary to Oregon's approach to democratic policy implementation. The community has consistently opposed this land transaction in the local area for over a decade.

- We do not need to pave over our farmland to create good jobs. The CHIPS Act provided significant capital investment in Oregon that totaled over \$3 billion last year.
- This bill would be rushed through in a short session without the accompanying analysis and public process that allows community engagement and review by state agencies.
- There has been no demonstration that the land is needed for industrial development or analysis taken into consideration of the farmland, natural resources, and other public values.

Clackamas County SWCD is dedicated to protecting our lands and water through strong support with tools for conservation, soil health practices, climate protective actions and community equity. Farmland protection provides economic resilience, food security, and climate stability. When farmland is lost it is permanently lost. The legislature needs to hold the line on providing support to maintain the stewardship for these lands for their quality soil and other productive capabilities in place throughout the term allowed by the rural reserves.

We urge you to protect Oregon's land use goals and the equity system established between resource lands and development lands. **Please oppose SB 1586.**

Sincerely,

*Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District*

Chris Lapp, District Manager

Jan Lee, Chair, and Members of the Clackamas Soil and Water District Advocacy Committee