

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

I am a third generation Oregonian having lived the majority of my life on agricultural lands. Our fourth generation grandsons are actively involved on their family farm. I have a deep and lasting appreciation for farm lands and the women and men who sustain, cultivate, and harvest those lands.

SB 1586 totally disregards the agreement reached in 2014 that stipulated specific agricultural lands would be protected for years. Why does the negotiated agreement of 2014 suddenly become something to totally abandon?

SB 1586 states there will be no stand alone data centers allowed on the 1700 acres requested. However, they could be constructed as an "accessory" to support other businesses. There are currently at least 43 data centers already constructed in the immediate Hillsboro area. SB 1586 would only increase that number. How much water, electricity, and valued farm land are we expected to sacrifice for these centers? The data centers can only offer limited, low paying wages and yet continue to benefit from significant tax incentives. Data centers take much more than they provide.

My main concern is that SB 1586 destroys working farm lands that will never be replaced; farm lands whose final crop will be parking lots, asphalt, and concrete. We need to acknowledge all of the contributions agriculture provides to Washington County, the state, and even the world. Safeway does not produce the foods we consume. Farmers are the only source.

SB 1586 simply rewards the City of Hillsboro for their blatant and brazen destruction of farm land in Washington County. In just over ten years the City of Hillsboro has burned through land that was designated for fifty years of growth.

SB 1586 is the sixth attempt to seize prime farm land in Washington County. When will these attempts to eradicate farms ever end?