

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

My name is Marius Brisan and I urge you to vote "NO" on SB1586. I have worked in high tech in Hillsboro for the past 30yrs. I strongly care about good economic development and public process. What Senator Sollman is proposing is destroying our lands, our agriculture and our lives. We do NOT need more data centers in the Portland Metro area, and especially in Hillsboro. All these data centers are deducing the water available for agriculture and regular consumers. in the same time increasing our electricity cost exponentially every year.

There was NO local public process: Normally, decisions like this have multiple public meetings, hundreds of pages of analysis on what the net cost would be, and community consensus on what they think economic development is. None of that has happened here. Everyone expected the land to remain rural until 2065 and local farmers and businesses alike had been making decisions based on that fact. The only ones who want this expansion are the landowners inside the 1700 acres and their lobbyist who would make hundreds of millions of dollars from the sale of this land.

The bill has a loophole that would allow almost unlimited data centers as long as they're "attached" to another business. Data centers don't produce much jobs (besides during construction) or tax revenue. And Hillsboro has plenty of land for them if that's how the city grows.

There is already plenty of land inside of our urban growth boundaries already for industries including high-tech. There's over 10,000 acres of industrial land around the state and 500 just next door to this land in Hillsboro. Hillsboro has had 15 years to attract high-job industries but instead is filling it rapidly with data centers and warehouses. The state does not even have an industrial lands inventory. We should know what we have and invest in those lands so we can minimize our costs and the impacts on surrounding farmland.

We the tax payers would bear the costs of this sprawl. Hillsboro hasn't shown detailed figures, but even their document shows they won't break even for 34 years. While we've heard that the bill may be amended to remove a provision that would double the tax break to businesses including data centers, another bill this session would extend a similar tax break. Other states are cutting or reassessing their tax breaks to these industries. We should not be using our tax dollars to incentivize low-job industries that waste our energy and natural resources and are profitable on their own – especially when we're in a budget crisis.

Taking this land irreparably harms another industry – agriculture. Agriculture depends on soil, and this land has some of the best in the world. Class 1 soils only make up about 2% of the soils in the Willamette River Basin and are the very best soils on earth. These are Class 1 and Class 2 soils and it is essential that we protect them for agricultural uses. Further, losing this large section of farmland that connects Washington county's farm country together could irreparably harm the entire industry.

I am submitting this testimony to you with the understanding that the bill may be amended between the opening of testimony and the hearing date. This is exceptionally poor process. If the legislature wants to receive public input on legislation, it needs to let the public know what they are commenting on. But even if the bill is amended to not include a tax abatement, we understand that HB 4084 would extend the same tax abatement - potentially indefinitely. And even if the bill limits the acreage in Hillsboro's UGB to 373 and in the urban reserve to the remaining 1700 acres, Hillsboro has never proven a need for more land.

For these reasons and more, please vote no on SB 1586.