

Submitter: Devon Lawson
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:

For the record, my name is Devon Lawson. I am testifying today in vehement opposition to SB 1586.

This bill is not an economic development plan; it is a catalog of concessions to the semiconductor industry that dismantles local control and threatens school funding. I urge you to vote No, or at a minimum, to strip Sections 10 and 19-21 from the bill.

Currently, ORS 285C.162 requires ("shall") that if a corporation gets a long-term enterprise zone exemption, it must pay a "school support fee" to the local district. Section 10 of this bill changes that word to "may," which makes funding our schools a negotiable perk rather than a mandatory obligation. Why are we asking Oregon students to subsidize the profit margins of multinational corporations?

This is a backdoor cut to education funding. If you pass this, you are giving corporations the legal right to refuse to support the schools that train their future workers.

These sections legislatively annex land into the Metro Urban Growth Boundary and designate specific rural reserves as "employment land," thereby bypassing all standard land-use processes. This replaces the democratic, evidence-based planning process with a political edict. If the legislature can unilaterally redraw the maps in Washington County today, they can redraw the maps in Deschutes or Crook County tomorrow. This sets a dangerous precedent of state centralization that overrides local decision-making.

This bill also extends the Enterprise Zone exemption period by an additional seven years. We are creating a class of corporate citizens who operate tax-free for decades, while working-class homeowners shoulder the burden of paying for roads, police, and fire services. This is not "incentivizing" investment; it is parasitic extraction.

SB 1586 asks this committee to betray our schools (Section 10) and our local democracy (Section 19) to satisfy the demands of capital. That is a price too high to pay.

I urge a No vote.

Thank you.

While I am a member of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, my testimony today represents only my personal view and not the position of the HECC.