

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

I do not see the benefit for the majority of constituents of allowing more industrial manufacturing take the place of farmland. The bill should not allow data centers as part of semiconductor research. Data centers do provide a short term boom in the economy due to construction related jobs, but once construction is complete, data centers only employ 5-30 full time employees. The investment in data centers looks good on paper: a boost to the money invested in the state and the presence of large tech companies (who get huge tax breaks) to ameliorate the perception that Oregon is anti-business. However, this infusion of money benefits few: The landholders within the 1700 acres, should they decide to sell, tech companies, and people who have invested in them. This leaves out the majority of the population. If no NEW renewable energy infrastructure is built in association with the data centers, then they put a burden on the existing power. Water in the area is sourced from the Tualatin River in the winter and reservoirs in the summer. But, as water demand is projected to increase so much, water is going to be diverted from the willamette. As the climate changes, data centers will only increase demand and further stress these water sources (which also have ecological value). Rate payers will foot the burden for the new infrastructure required to meet the demand driven by data centers. The proposed tax breaks, to attract data centers to the area, also don't benefit actual Oregonians. Large companies will benefit, while local residents receive no benefits to their schools, roads, and communities for the next decade or so. Finally, the land that is proposed to be incorporated into the urban land base is fertile farmland. Farmland around the country is disappearing. As the population grows, and demand for food does as well, we need to ensure we have land in proximity to cities that we can actually farm. In 50 years (if that), when the data center infrastructure is too old to be beneficial, who will foot the cost for the brownfield left behind or the money needed to revamp the area? I'd much rather see a farm and be able to get locally grown produce or grain or see animal feed being grown, stuff that actually benefits people. Overall, this evidence is confounding; who do our elected officials really serve: large companies and a few landholders, or the people? If the bill must move forward, changes must be made to plan for the long-term sustainability of data center infrastructure within the existing urban growth boundary, not just short term economic gain and tax breaks for tech companies. I want a government that works to serve everyday Oregonians, present and future, and their interests.