

Dear Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and members of the committee:

My name is Nicole Ruggiero and I'm writing in strong opposition to SB 1586. As a resident of Washington County, I've watched as valuable farmland and open spaces have been paved over and gobbled up in the name of "jobs" at an alarming rate. When is enough, enough?

This desire for rapid expansion of the Hillsboro UGB is short-cited and unfounded. Industries come and go, leaving vacancies within the current UGB and expensive eyesores. The same argument for jobs was made when SB4 passed, and then the semiconductor industry had massive layoffs. We can count on agriculture as a leader in the Washington County economy. Paving this prime soil over for these so-called "jobs" is killing our farms. Why would we destroy our world-class soils and local farm businesses, when we have not utilized the industrial lands already available here?

Additionally, this whole approach, including the name of the bill, wreaks dishonesty. SB1586 is attempting to reverse a negotiated agreement that these very lands will remain as rural reserve until 2065. The lack of integrity, lack of transparency, disregard for our land use system and inadequate public process leave no doubt that this bill is not in the public's best interest, but in the interest of few who will surely profit.

Lastly, the farms and open space in our rural areas are essential to Oregon's economy and quality of life. This is some of the best farmland in the world. These farms give us food and fiber, clean water and air to breath, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. The public values these things immensely and Oregon's history of protecting our farmland and natural resources is what makes us great.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote no on SB 1586.

Thank you,

Nicole Ruggiero
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