

Oregon Senate Interim Committee on Finance and Revenue
State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, Oregon 97301

February 15, 2026

RE: Amending SB 1586 by deleting Sections 19, 20 and 21

Summary

- Fourteen months ago, the Metro Council, including the four Councilors who support this legislation, found there were 5,331 acres of vacant industrial land inside the regional urban growth boundary, 3,931 acres more than were needed to meet regional needs for industrial employment over the next 20 years.
- In 2024, Washington County declined to request an urban growth boundary expansion for industrial employment during Metro's recent urban growth boundary review process, indicating it did not believe it had a need for additional industrial land.
- The serious consideration being given to this legislation is the conclusive proof that legislators' and Metro Councilors' promises of "compromises" and "grand bargains" and "certainty" are worthless cynical ploys used to further enrich land speculators who develop Oregon land needed for farming, forestry, water and wildlife.
- Having the Legislature acting as a political zoning board of appeal for land speculators, combined with campaign contributions from those special development interests, is corrupting Oregon's remarkable land use system into a pay-to-play game.

Explication

Certainty and predictability were the reasons the reserves legislation and reserves designation process were sold to, and by, the Legislature and the Metro Council. The fact-based urban and rural reserves designation process was supposed to provide that certainty and predictability for both adding land needed for jobs and housing and for long-term protection of the land needed for farming, forestry and wildlife.

I served on the Metro Council when urban and rural reserves were designated. I believed then, as now, that too much land was designated for urban reserves and too little for rural reserves. But after a two-year process we were supposed to have achieved certainty.

This was followed by the so-called "grand bargain" legislation to settle litigation over the reserves designations. That legislation gave Washington County even more urban reserves than were justified by the facts.

Now Senator Sollman and other Oregon legislators are trying to blow up the “grand bargain” and the fact-based reserves process for the benefit of politically well-connected wealthy land speculators and land developers.

Just fourteen months ago, after a year of technical analysis, Metro found there were 5,331 acres of vacant industrial land inside the regional urban growth boundary, 3,931 acres more than were needed to meet regional needs over the next 20 years. The data is summarized in this excerpt and table from the Urban Growth Report adopted by the Metro Council:

Industrial land gap analysis results

Industrial lands support uses like industrial, flex/business parks, and warehousing. This analysis found that, in aggregate, there is a surplus of industrial lands inside the UGB for meeting expected industrial employment growth. This is true even under the high growth forecast.

Table 19: Industrial land capacity gap for Metro UGB 2024-2044

| | Capacity (acres) | Demand (acres) | Surplus or deficit (acres) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Low growth forecast | 5,331 | -1,500 | +6,831 |
| Baseline growth forecast | 5,331 | 1,400 | +3,931 |
| High growth forecast | 5,331 | 5,200 | +131 |

Washington County did not submit a UGB expansion proposal during the urban growth boundary review process in 2023-2024, indicating it did not believe it had a need for additional land for employment.

This legislation is additional proof, if any is needed, that only the politically naïve believe in “compromises”, “bargains” and “certainty” when it comes to attacks on Oregon’s landmark laws that promote housing and transportation choices, save taxpayers’ money and protect land needed for food, fiber, water and wildlife. The pressure to allow more development to further enrich the wealthy is relentless and so must be the opposition to them. Never again should anyone rely on promises made by legislators, Washington County officials, or the Metro Council, about “compromises” they use to justify more unnecessary land development.

A look at the campaign contributions to legislators and the Metro Councilors supporting this legislation shows the extent that “pay to play” is corrupting Oregon’s land development and conservation system at the expense of farming, forestry, water and wildlife and to further enrich the already wealthy.

This corruption is fostered by the Legislature’s increasing role as a zoning board of appeal for the sole benefit of land speculators and local governments hostile to land and resource conservation. Anyone who studies history knows this is the path to corruption.

Please amend SB 1586 by deleting Sections 19, 20 and 21 and stop acting as a zoning board of appeal for wealthy development interests.



Robert L. Liberty