

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

My name is Terry Wahl and I'm writing in strong opposition to SB 1586. This bill would put 1,700 acres of prime farmland in Hillsboro at risk of industrial development, and I am deeply opposed to doing that.

My opposition to the actions proposed by SB 1586 include:

1. The farmland west of Hillsboro now proposed for industrial development has some of the best soils on earth;
2. There are already at least 10,000 acres of industrial lands available inside Oregon's urban growth boundaries, including several hundred ready to develop in Hillsboro alone;
3. This bill would throw aside the decision made after long, hard negotiations to designate this land as rural reserves until 2065. There is no justification for reversing that decision and the commitment this farmland would stay rural reserves until 2065;
4. If the public process that resulted in this land being designated as rural reserves until 2065 is thrown aside, it jeopardizes the surrounding prime farmland, too, and adds enormous pressure on that remaining resource; and
5. This bill undercuts Oregon's effective, long-standing protection of "working lands" for agriculture, and the natural resources on those lands.

I am a lifelong Oregon rancher, my family just spent the last seven years working to put our ranch under a conservation easement that permanently protects several hundred acres of important fish and wildlife habitat and agricultural production land, and protecting Oregon's remaining farmland is a priority. I am very concerned that Oregon would lose the prime farmland proposed to be re-designated by SB 1586. Prime farmland is an incredibly valuable resource, and there is no justification for re-designating that resource and putting it at risk of becoming industrial lands instead.

I urge you to vote no on SB 1586, and appreciate you considering my comments.

Thank you,
Terry Wahl