

February 15, 2026

Dear Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue:

I am writing to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1586. The process for this proposed legislation has not been democratic. The creators of this bill should have known that this kind of land use swap would be extremely controversial and, thus, should have conducted a vibrant public process. That has not occurred. Besides the lack of transparency, this legislation is flawed in a number of other ways.

First, the 1700 acres proposed for industrial use was to remain agricultural until at least 2065. The general public does not benefit from the conversion of this land to industrial use. Although Senator Sollman and other land grab proponents claim it is not for data centers, it is clear that the loophole allowing a data center if attached to other businesses will allow data centers. Residents across the country are questioning the rapacious growth of data centers. As the negative impacts (e.g. climate impacts of operation, rising utility costs, noise) of data centers pile up, residents around the country are rising up. Elected officials and those seeking elected office are finding that uncritical support for data center development and expansion is becoming a liability. Other commercial and industrial developments such as logistic centers and warehouses that displace valuable farmland are unacceptable for many of the same reasons.

Secondly, we need to seriously question the conversion of ANY farmland to industrial or commercial uses in light of threats to our food security system. According to the American Farmland Trust, a national non-profit founded by farmers and conservationists, global realities such as the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and widespread drought, are pushing millions more people into severe hunger. Oregonians rely on an increasingly fragile food network both globally and locally. Oregon growers face the challenges of climatic changes and their broad impacts (e.g. extreme heat, drought, less plant resistance to disease). Protecting the farmland we currently have is critical, especially when it is among the most valuable agricultural land in the state.

Thirdly, farmland contributes to a vibrant ecosystem that can also sequester carbon in the soil, protect water quality, and provide habitat for diverse wildlife and native species. Its links to other agricultural and natural ecosystems in the surrounding area are critical to establishing more robust benefits to all of the above.

Lastly, this bill proposes an even greater tax break for businesses, including data centers. Even if this is removed from the bill, there is another bill proposing the same. All too often these tax breaks provide no benefit to the general public and little or short-lived benefits to the workforce. They often have very negative effects on local public health and the climate. These tax breaks were unacceptable before we were in a budget crisis. Cutting taxes for these kinds of developments is unconscionable,

especially now when we can't even fund vital services to provide for vulnerable Oregonians or an increasingly damaged ecosystem.

Again, I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 1586.

Sincerely,

Leslie Kochan
8706 NE Russell Street
Portland, OR
kochanleslie@gmail.com