

Date: 2/16/2026

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

From: Miki & David Barnes

Chair Broadman, members of the committee,

We are writing to voice our opposition to SB 1586, known as the Jobs, Opportunity, Build-ready Sites (JOBS) Act.

As noted by others there is plenty of acreage available within the current UGB, thereby eliminating the need to expand onto rapidly dwindling agricultural land.

A 2/14/2024 OPB article [Oregon Continues to Lose Farmland, Some Advocates Say That Raises Red Flags](#) includes the following statement, "From 2017 to 2022, Oregon lost 4% of its farmland. The state is the second highest among western states with the most decrease in farmland behind Washington..." According to the Tualatin Valley Soil and Water District outreach specialist Annie Bronez, "...the loss of agricultural land in Washington County is happening much faster than in other areas. In only five years, 23% of our farmland was converted to other uses (Source: 2017 U.S. Ag Census, National Agricultural Statistics Service)." (See [Cedar Mill News 4/30/2022](#))

For this reason it is crucial that Oregon protect its remaining agricultural lands rather than give them away to yet another polluting industry.

Oregon's misguided focus on short term economic gain at the expense of public health, the environment and ecological diversity puts local residents at risk.

The rapid growth of polluting industries in Oregon, including aviation activity, is having dramatic adverse impacts.

Recent record-breaking wildfire seasons in Oregon have been alarming. Immediate measures to protect precious farmland and curb, rather than increase, greenhouse gases and pollution, must be implemented, and Oregon must do its part.

Hi tech industries are notoriously transitory - they come and go, often chasing the incentives dangled before them by state and local governments. In return for tax breaks and price breaks on resources such as power and water, they promise to create some jobs.

If the projects even get started (remember Project Azalea in 2013?), they forever destroy prime farmland to offer short-term construction jobs, creating spaces to be occupied by businesses that employ a small number of people.

These business then pay reduced taxes, if they pay any at all, then pack up and move as soon as another state offers them a better package of handouts.

In contrast, land-based resource industries that have powered Oregon throughout most of its history support stable communities, steward irreplaceable farmland for future generations, and keep local economies alive and thriving.

As 30-year residents of Washington County, we have grown weary of the whiplash our communities endure from short-sighted taxpayer-funded incentives doled out to out-of-state corporations that come and go, leaving behind laid-off workers, empty office parks and ruined farmland.

Washington County is the most lead-polluted jurisdiction in Oregon, largely due to aviation activity generated by private pilots and the international flight training industry. One obvious option that would simultaneously reduce pollution and preserve farmland outside the UGB is to repurpose the noisy, toxic, historically non-revenue generating Hillsboro Airport (HIO), a facility that occupies 900 acres of valuable real estate. HIO has been chronically dependent on government handouts for decades. It currently serves a tiny sliver of the population - private pilots, hobbyists, and charter jet companies as well as the east coast investment firms who own the international flight school, Hillsboro Aero Academy - the primary user of HIO. This land can be far better utilized to serve the community rather than degrade, pollute and poison area residents.

Oregon can more responsibly serve its constituents by addressing the air pollution, climate change, and global warming caused by the computer industries, data centers and airports that are already such major polluters in Hillsboro and Washington County instead of aggressively and recklessly pursuing more growth onto some of the best soils in the world.

Please vote NO on SB 1586.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Miki & David Barnes
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