

Submitter: Kymberlin Bush
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

My name is Kymberlin Bush, and I am a community member from Hillsboro. I am writing to you today to strongly oppose SB 1586. This is an unnecessary annexation of EFU-zoned land that hurts farmers, sets a bad precedent for ignoring the public process in land use matters, disregards our high-value soils, and potentially continues to use our dwindling water supply in favor of filling the pockets of a select few. It is also deliberately misleading. Calling it the “JOBS Act” during a time of desperation for many Oregonians trying to keep the lights on amidst record unemployment is not only deceptive, but it’s downright malicious.

Your opposition to SB 1586 is important to me because once this land is paved over, there is no going back. We cannot reclaim the high-quality agricultural soil we have here in the Willamette Valley once it is gone. Throwing away our valuable resources like these soils and our water supply for the vague promise of jobs is a foolish choice and one that should have much more input from the local community.

SB 1586 disregards all usual pathways for the rezoning of land. The “Grand Bargain” of 2014, which granted the city of Hillsboro 1,000 acres of industrial land (500 of which remain unused) was supposed to last for 50 years. It has only been 12, the 1,700 acres in question should remain in rural reserves until 2065.

Senator Janeen Sollman is being lobbied by landowners and others who stand to make potentially a billion dollars if this Bill passes, despite her insistence that she is not. Her lack of willingness to accept public comment on this issue continues to prove this point. If this bill passes amidst the clear disregard for standard procedure, it will set a dangerous precedent for the stealing of land from agricultural enclaves across the state for decades to come.

For 10 years, Oregonians have been promised more jobs and increased economic opportunity in return for the sacrifice of high-quality, producing farmland to Big Tech companies and their data centers. All we have received are higher water and electricity bills, waste in natural areas, raised taxes to cover the tax breaks for these giant companies, and the highest unemployment rates since 2020.

We need this land to remain agriculturally viable. Without farms and the farmers that steward them, we will not have food, our soil will continue to deteriorate, and we will continue sliding down the slope towards water bankruptcy and climate disaster in the PNW that has been predicted for over 20 years.

Oregon has a thriving community food system because our land use laws protect EFU land close to our urban centers. Without this land, small farmers would not be able to make all the CSAs, farmers markets, and farm stands that Oregonians love possible. SB 1586 is not necessary; there is other land within Hillsboro's UGB and the UGB of neighboring cities like Wilsonville that is better suited.

Do not sacrifice this agricultural land for a vague promise of tech investment. Do not set a precedent of ignoring community input and public process. Do not support SB 1586!

Thank you,

Kymberlin Bush
Hillsboro