

Date: February 16, 2026
To: Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
From: Mary Nolan, Metro Councilor
Subject: Opposition to Senate Bill 1886

Thank you for the opportunity to convey my opposition to Senate Bill 1586. Please consider the facts, history and perspectives that follow below.

I'm Mary Nolan, I represent 180,000 Oregonians on Metro Council, in issues ranging from transportation, the Oregon Zoo, building affordable housing, pioneer cemeteries, land use and more.

I speak today on behalf of myself and those 180,000 people, and as a business owner on whom 65 Oregonians and their families depend for a reliable living wage paycheck

I honor the intentions and hopes of the sponsors of this bill. I join them in working toward prosperity in our region and state – and more living wage jobs, including construction jobs.

As introduced, SB 1586 looks like fool's gold. It sparkles with the possibility of new jobs. But how many? at what wage? how soon? for how long? It tantalizes with proximity to the "next big thing" but forfeits some of the most productive farmland ***on the planet***. And let's remember, the goddess isn't making any more of that soil. Once it's paved over, it will not produce food or other agricultural products in our lifetimes. The bill flashes nuggets in front of us but doesn't require a binding commitment to deliver even one net new jobs.

Indeed, when Metro conducted its state-mandated Urban Growth Management decision just over a year ago, we invited all 23 cities in the region to request changes to the UGB. Hillsboro did not ask for an expansion. We collaborated with cities within the greater Portland UGB (including Hillsboro) and cities nearby to plan for housing and employment for the next 20 years – until 2044. We invited business groups and boosters, city officials (including Hillsboro), agricultural interests, developers, conservationists, worker representatives, young people and regular residents, to help validate our analysis and data. Collectively, this year-long effort, concluded that the ***greater Portland region already has sufficient land to support job growth for the next 20 years. Already within the existing UGB.***

The legislature established a statewide standard process for changing adopted urban growth boundaries. Every city in the state follows the same process. In the Portland region, with 23 cities adjacent to each other, Metro has been given the responsibility and authority to conduct a rigorous urban growth management decision to balance both benefits and burdens of our shared land among all cities and communities.

Throughout its effective implementation, Oregon's consistent, fact- and evidence-based land use system has simultaneously advance land development for housing, jobs, leisure as well as conservation of irreplaceable natural areas, animal habitat, productive agricultural and forest resources. You might also refer to the evolution of Oregon land use law. The legislature has clarified, amended, and updated our land use laws. The voters statewide have twice re-affirmed their support for Oregon's land use system and the broad, valuable and well-documented successes it has delivered for Oregon residents, workers and visitors.

There's no justification to make this land urban reserves and especially not bring it into the urban growth boundary.

There's no reason to favor the owners of this land over the owners and interested developers of other, arguably more suitable, industrial land in the region.

There's no guarantee that **any** jobs will come. If they do, there's no commitment to assuring that those jobs and profit will benefit Oregon or the Portland region or even Washington County.

There has been no accounting of the cost of losing irreplaceable farmland, no recognition of the cost of infrastructure to serve unspecified "growth" that will just come if we sacrifice a big part of what makes Oregon truly treasured.

No part of the bill as introduced protects quality of life, or even acknowledges that without public, regionwide collaboration, development under the provisions of this bill is more likely to deteriorate the airshed and watershed worse for western Washington County, make for longer and more expensive commutes, and dramatically spike water and electric utility bills for neighbors and all the existing businesses who operate productively without the need for massive growth in power plants.

The legislature has considered this request in various forms before and rejected it. I urge you to reject this version and suggest the proponents find other ways to meet their goals – just like every other city or community that wants to be part of the Oregon we've created together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nolan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mary Nolan
Metro Councilor

