

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

Dear Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue,

As a small farmer, ecologist, and climate activist, I am opposed to Senate Bill 1586. We should not be moving 373 acres of prime farmland into the Hillsboro UGN nor designating an additional 1400 acres as urban reserves when they were promised by the state to be maintained as rural reserves until 2065. Hillsboro has had very land intensive industrial development since being granted 1000 acres in 2014 and there has been no accountability for the lack of good job creation in data centers and other relatively low-paying and low job number industries that also often have extremely negative climate impacts. This bill allows data centers to be part of other industrial development and focuses on advanced manufacturing and high tech.

With the area in question having some of the highest quality farming soils in the world and being incredibly important for both soil and blue carbon sequestration, it is critical to save these farmlands and preserve the wetlands, watersheds, tributaries, and habitats in question. Once you pave over high quality farm land it is not truly reversible and in the next decades given the climate crisis we are likely to need these lands for local food and sequestration security. This legislation will disproportionately benefit a very few large property owners looking to sell their land at higher prices since industrial lands bring in 3-5x the revenue of EFU lands. Agriculture is our states second largest economic sector and continuing to shrink prime farmland is a very poor economic decision.

Catalyzing these speculative land processes will not only make land prices not affordable for those wanting to farm, but farmers will be unwilling to put in the investment if they fear rezoning and urbanization or industrialization. Oregon needs a better approach to industrial development and an accompanying full inventory of appropriate statewide lands. Furthermore, the bill extends unnecessary tax benefits, to the detriment of other state programs in a very lean fiscal year. Please vote 'no' on this poorly conceived and written bill that does not meet the real needs of future generations as many have already testified. Thanks for your time and consideration.