



February 17, 2026

Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and Members of the Committee,

Willamette Riverkeeper submits this testimony in strong opposition to SB 1586 and any amendments that would expand the Hillsboro UGB. Willamette Riverkeeper is a nonprofit organization that works to protect and restore the Willamette River and its tributaries and that includes protecting the Willamette Valley's world renowned, nutrient rich soil.

The 1,700 acres SB 1586 seeks to incorporate into Hillsboro's UGB are rural reserves that are supposed to be protected from urbanization until 2065. This land has some of the world's best soils and would be developed for industrial use, specifically advanced manufacturing and high technology development, including data centers as long as they are not the only use of the land.

These high value soils cannot be replicated on other land. It took thousands of years for this soil to become as nutrient-dense as it is and paving it over for industrial projects would reduce access to these soils, increase the cost of farmland, and lower the area's carbon sequestration potential. Our local small family farmers already face many difficulties and attempts to take farmland away and develop it not only harms these farmers but also threatens local food security, increases runoff and pollutants in our waterways, and destroys small wetlands that are vital habitat for our aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

Hillsboro has quickly developed much of its industrial land, most of which has become data centers that do not employ many people and have not created so called "good jobs." There is no evidence that this new land would be developed in a way that will significantly increase jobs and help the local community.

Farmers, by contrast, are deeply connected to the land, and they are vital members of our communities. Those currently farming this land live, work, and recreate in the areas and their children go to the local schools. These farmers are fully integrated into our communities, and they are great stewards of our land. Please do not eliminate productive farmland for industrial development that strains our resources and gives nothing back.

This bill would benefit only a small number of landowners who could sell their property at a significant profit, while harming the broader community. It would harm working farmers, undermine local community stability, and reduce critical habitat for wildlife.

Please vote no on SB 1586 and keep this land in rural reserves until at least 2065.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heather King, Co-Executive Director and Lower Willamette Riverkeeper
heather@willametteriverkeeper.org

Michelle Emmons, Co-Executive Director and Upper Willamette Riverkeeper
michelle@willametteriverkeeper.org

Eugene: 454 Willamette St. #218 | Eugene, OR 97401
Portland: 8940 N Bradford St. | Portland, OR 97203
503-223-6418