

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

Chair Broadman, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the committee,

My name is Joseph Schmitz. I'm a fourth-generation logger and a first-generation forester from Silverton, Oregon, currently earning my Master of Forestry at Oregon State University. I've worked across both the public and private sectors in land management — from industrial timberlands to public restoration projects — and I'm here in opposition to SB 1586.

I oppose this bill because it breaks a long-term promise, undermines working lands, and erodes trust in Oregon's land use system.

In 2014, the legislature committed to protecting these rural reserves until at least 2065. That wasn't just a line on a map. It was a signal to farmers and landowners that they could invest in their operations without the constant fear of urban encroachment. When the state revisits that commitment again and again, it creates uncertainty. And uncertainty drives speculation, not stewardship.

These are not marginal acres. They are some of the highest-value agricultural soils in the world. Once industrialized, that capacity is gone permanently. You cannot replace prime farmland with mitigation credits or policy language.

I work in natural resources. I understand the need for economic development. But Oregon should not be forcing agriculture and advanced manufacturing into competition on the same ground — especially when agriculture remains one of the state's largest and most stable economic engines. Working lands support more than just farmers. They support mechanics, truck drivers, seed processors, small equipment shops, and entire rural communities.

Hillsboro has already received significant industrial land intended to meet long-term needs. Before expanding outward onto protected rural reserves, we should be asking whether existing lands have been used efficiently and whether they've delivered the high-quality jobs that were promised.

As a forester, I plan in decades. Forest rotations run 40 to 80 years. Land use policy should carry the same discipline. If a 50-year protection can be revisited 11 years in, what confidence should any rural landowner have in future agreements?

Oregon's land use system has long been a national model because it respected firm

boundaries and long-term vision. For the sake of agricultural stability, watershed health, and public trust, I urge you to vote no on SB 1586.

Thank you.