

Subject: Testimony in Opposition to SB 1586

Chair Broadman and Members of the Committee:

I'm Greg Macpherson. I live on a Linn County farm where I grow hazelnuts. Success in farming or any other business requires certainty.

In 2007 when I served in the House we launched a process for creating certainty for farmers and landowners on the future use of lands outside Portland. This was needed because the soils north of Hillsboro are really high quality - much better than on my farm.

The best of the best farmland would be rural reserves & other lands urban reserves. And these designations would apply for 50 years.

The process was contentious.

It was resolved by the legislature in 2014 in a so-called Grand Bargain.

That should have created certainty.

But repeatedly since 2014 speculators keep trying to rip up the Grand Bargain.

This year's SB 1586 would grab 1700 acres of rural reserves for development.

Supporters say SB 1586 is a compromise. But it's really tearing up a compromise.

Not a lot has changed since 2014.

Speculators made the same claims then about Oregon's economy and availability of industrial land as they're making now.

But what has changed is the arrival of data centers.

These employ very few people and suck up vast amounts of electricity and water making both more expensive for consumers.

Those pushing SB 1586 claim it restricts data centers on the lands in question.

But the bill allows them if "accessory" to other allowed uses.

That's a hole they can drive truckloads full of computer servers through.

The legislature has repeatedly said No to the speculators.

You need to do so again. Thank you.