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

SB 1586 moves Oregon in the wrong direction by treating prime farmland as expendable when viable urban alternatives exist.

The Willamette Valley contains some of the most productive soils in the world, yet this bill accelerates permanent land loss for low-employment, land-intensive uses that could be accommodated inside existing urban growth boundaries.

The metro area currently has substantial vacancy in newer Class A office buildings that already possess modern structural, seismic, and connectivity features. With targeted incentives, these buildings can absorb data-intensive and accessory compute uses without expanding the UGB. Retrofitting these buildings for data-intensive uses would put electricians, engineers, construction trades, and maintenance workers to work immediately — while strengthening downtown tax bases and preserving farmland that supports jobs for generations.

SB 1586 socializes long-term costs — lost farmland, new infrastructure, and grid expansion — while privatizing short-term benefits. Oregon's land-use system was designed to prevent exactly this outcome.

We should modernize incentives and utilities planning to prioritize urban reuse before converting irreplaceable agricultural land.