

Submitter: Marsha Kirk
On Behalf Of: Long standing residence of western Washington Co
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or SB1586
Topic:

I am opposed to SB 1585

I am a fourth-generation resident of Washington County. My lineage has farmed land in Washington County since 1865. That history is not symbolic to me — it is lived, worked, and defended every generation since. How many of you can even say you have lived here for more than 30 years? I am here to speak firmly against further industrial growth on active and viable farmland with some of the best soils in the nation.

We need farms to grow food. Once farmland is paved over, it is gone forever. You cannot replace soil that took generations to build with concrete, warehouses, or industrial campuses and pretend it is progress. Green space matters — not just for beauty, but for food security, water, wildlife, and the long-term health of this county. Less pavement, not more, is what protects our future.

If jobs are your justification, then let's be honest about what kinds of jobs we are choosing. We do not need more technology-heavy developments, data centers, or battery plants consuming massive acreage while employing relatively few people. There are many other types of businesses that provide employment without destroying farmland or overwhelming rural infrastructure. Those options are being ignored.

Do not involve Metro! Local voices must come first. Why are almost 50 % of the supporters of this bill either from out of the state or not in our county? Why do they dictate what we do in our county? Do not impose regional plans without consent. Ask the surrounding small cities first if they even want to be swallowed by these expansion plans. Ask the rural residents — the lush green half of the county — not just the half that is already paved over. Decisions should not be made solely by those who no longer live with the consequences.

Historical areas are being ruined. Washington County has been ignoring its own goal 5 for years, and many historic places have already been destroyed. Once again, we are being told that sacrifice is necessary. Enough has already been lost. Washington County's identity should not be just industrial sprawl / Tech land — it is also farms, open land, and communities with deep roots.

You have already attempted to attract businesses to Oregon and failed. Instead of strengthening the local economy, these policies have driven long-standing businesses away. Now you are asking residents to give up another 17,000 acres of farmland to fix financial problems that we did not create. Clean up your own financial messes without adding this land grab to the list.

This land has sustained families, communities, and food production for centuries. It deserves protection, not exploitation. Growth that destroys the very foundation of this

county is not smart growth — it is short-sighted and irreversible. I urge you to stop the industrial expansion of these 17,000 acres onto farmland, protect green space, respect rural voices, and preserve what remains of Washington County before there is nothing left to save. Will you listen to the larger number of your actual constituents who are opposed to this bill, or will you sell out? Shame on you!