



February 19, 2026

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Opposition for Senate Bill 1586, Relating to economic development

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

On behalf of the more than 55,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, we write in opposition of Senate Bill 1586. SB 1586 would bypass Oregon's established land use planning laws to forcibly annex approximately 1,700 acres of land into the Hillsboro portion of the Metro urban growth boundary (UGB). This is not ordinary land, it is some of the world's most productive farmland, zoned for exclusive farm use and designated as a rural reserve. That rural reserve designation exists for a reason which is to provide longterm protection from exactly this kind of urbanization.

The rural reserve designation in question was established by the legislature in 2014 as part of a carefully negotiated legal settlement involving every major stakeholder including Hillsboro and Washington County, both of which publicly committed to honoring it. In exchange for that commitment, Hillsboro received automatic annexation of over 1,000 acres of farmland into the UGB for future industrial use, without going through the normal land use process. SB 1586 tears up that agreement. It breaks faith with every party that negotiated in good faith and has lived by its terms for over a decade. If Oregon allows one party to walk away from a legislatively sanctioned settlement when it becomes inconvenient, it undermines the integrity of every future land use negotiation in this state.

Rather than serving a clear public need, SB 1586 would benefit private land speculators seeking to develop this agricultural land for data centers, warehouses, and other land-extensive, low-employment uses. We've already seen this play out with some of the 1,000 acres annexed in 2014 world-class farmland converted not to community-sustaining industry, but to data center overdevelopment, with emerging evidence of negative health and environmental impacts in Washington County's watersheds.¹

This bill would permanently eliminate irreplaceable farmland agriculture is Oregon's and Washington County's second largest industry and destroy land that currently sequesters carbon. In its place, we would inherit sprawl: more car dependent development at the urban edge, longer commutes, increased carbon and air pollution, and costly infrastructure extensions to serve land

¹ <https://tualatinriverkeepers.org/about-us/news-updates/data-centers-damaging-wetlands>



that sits far from existing services. Oregon already has thousands of acres of industrially zoned land inside its existing cities, including large parcels in Hillsboro and across the Metro region. Before paving over the state's best farmland, we should be investing in and activating the land we already have, creating jobs in established communities throughout Oregon rather than chasing sprawl at the fringe.

SB 1586 is bad land use policy, bad environmental policy, and bad faith governance. It would permanently sacrifice irreplaceable natural and agricultural resources for the benefit of a few private interests, while saddling Oregon's communities with the long-term costs of sprawl. Sierra Club Oregon urges this committee to reject SB 1586.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Bowes, Policy Strategist

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Bowes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

1821 SE Ankeny Street · Portland, OR 97214
503-238-0442

emily.bowes@sierraclub.org
www.oregonsierraclub.org

@ORSierraClub on Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter