

Opposition to HB 2655

When I meet up with friends for a walk in the park, I often ask them what they think are the most important issues our community faces today. After some deliberation, invariably the loss of farmland will rise to the top of the list. The vital importance of maintaining a balance between food supply and population is critical. Many countries have suffered severely when population overwhelms food supply. When housing begins to spread into rural areas, it impacts farming dramatically by oozing outward with more and more dense housing. It generally starts with one house on a large area of land. Then another appears. At first it seems harmless. But, then, what I call the creep factor takes place as more houses appear and the lot size diminishes. The housing pushes out the farmer, and farming always loses. We have seen this in West Salem, and it is occurring in South Salem. Other issues arise, as residential areas compete with farms for water. Soon there is not enough water for agriculture or live stock. Residential people will complain about the air, the odor from crops or animals, the fertilizer and pesticide spraying. Again the farmer always loses. In addition to this, the change in the environment when this takes place increases the problem of global warming. Dense housing with its paved roads and increased automobile traffic increases the temperatures. It is the forests and farmland that keep temperatures at a moderate level. Plants are mother natures climate regulator. Dense housing disrupts that natural control. I urge you to think carefully about this bill.