

Submitter: Sarah Deumling
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB70

I am a rural land owner and manager in rural Polk County. On our country road, once dominated by folks who were farming, the number of houses has significantly more than doubled in the last 30 years even with our land use laws. There seem to be many ways to put up a new house where one would not expect it to be allowed. With few exception the inhabitants of the new houses are not farming. The character of the community has changed, less land is being farmed.

Our productive farm land throughout the state is our ace-in-the-hole. It cannot leave, like businesses who move in for a while due to tax breaks, and if we treat that land well it will continue to sustain us in good times and bad. Malheur County has remarkably productive farmland for an Eastern Oregon County and all of it that is suitable for crops should be used for that purpose. Water is precious, sometimes scarce, and should be used for growing crops to feed folks and help the economy, not for fancy houses on a few acres that are likely not contributing much to the local economy. Measure 16 was a mistake for the future economy and culture of Malheur County and SB 70 will be even bigger mistake by allowing more big houses on parcels of what could be productive ag land. I urge you to think of the future of Malheur County communities, the importance of the agriculture to our collective future and to reject SB 70.