



SAVE HELVETIA

13260 NW Bishop Rd
Hillsboro, OR 97124
March 28, 2025

House Committee On Housing and Homelessness

Oppose HB 3928

Save Helvetia, a private non-profit advocacy organization, has been active since 2010 to protect farm and forestlands in Washington County. We organized during the Metro Urban and Rural Reserves planning process, studying lands in and around the Helvetia area, submitting testimonies to Washington County, Metro, and LCDC. We were among the appellants to the Oregon State Court of Appeals, prevailing in our citizen science assertions. The county and Metro had misapplied the law and administrative rules in selecting the urban and rural reserves lands. The court remand of the reserves decision led to unprecedented negotiation in the legislature – the Grand Bargain (HB 4078) of 2014 – in which this “one-time-only” land-use bill had unanimous, bipartisan support among the affected jurisdictions. We are now affiliated with 1000 Friends of Oregon, continuing to monitor and defend land use laws and principles. Since 1843, our farmers have stewarded the land, giving us food, Oregon beauty, and climate security.

We oppose HB 3928. The bill creates incentives for developers to purchase agricultural land, take it out of production, and build sprawling, unincorporated, large-lot subdivisions that will not solve our need for affordable urban housing. Worse, it creates exemptions to existing rules by LUBA, LCDC, all statewide Planning Goals, and local comp plans. In addition, by increasing demand for the land, this bill would increase the cost of working lands – further pricing out farmers, ranchers, and foresters from growing their operations – which makes it even harder for young farmers and ranchers to become established.

Our farmlands are a source of pride, beauty, and Oregon identity, but they seem to be under attack this legislative session. Farming is dependent on the land. Our traded sector ag industry, its network economy, and profitability, brings money into our state. And Oregon communities benefit from the food and fiber production of our agricultural land. Let's keep it that way!

Affordable Housing is needed – only inside urban growth boundaries, not on prime farmland.

NO on HB 3928.

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Advancing policies, leaders and actions that protect Helvetia's treasured resources.