



## SAVE HELVETIA

13260 NW Bishop Rd

Hillsboro, OR 97124

February 10, 2025

House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson and Committee Members

### **Opposition to HB 3921**

Save Helvetia, a private non-profit advocacy organization, has been active since 2010 to protect farm and forestlands in Washington County, having organized during the Metro Urban and Rural Reserves planning process. We studied 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 boundaries. The court remand of the reserves decision led to unprecedented negotiation in the legislature – the Grand Bargain (HB 4078) of 2014. 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. We live on Kalapuyan Land. Since 1843, farmers have stewarded the land of Helvetia, contributing food, beauty, and climate security. Since 1973, our land use laws have offered processes to protect Oregon’s farm, forest, and coastal lands while supporting transportation, economic, and urban uses of the land with robust citizen involvement.

**We oppose HB 3921** as an effort to circumvent the land use laws and processes by legislative land use, evading the important process of public involvement at the local level where vital information can be learned. As noted above, Save Helvetia knows something about citizen science having provided Washington County and Metro testimonies that would have saved them the court remand of their expensive Urban and Rural Reserves planning process back in 2014. The Oregon State Court of Appeals found that Washington County and Metro erred in their application of law and administrative rules in their selection of proposed reserves. Local citizens had pointed out these errors during the testimony process, supplying the county with detailed profiles of the lands under study. During the resulting HB 4078, the Grand Bargain of 2014, these errors were corrected by a unanimous, bipartisan, and bicameral act of the legislature. Then Governor Kitzhaber promised support **ONLY IF** this was a one time decision on land use by the legislature. It was a landslide decision that recognized not only the unique urgency of the moment, but also the ongoing necessity to respect **local process** in Oregon’s land use law.

**No on HB 3921** Please don’t reward end runs that bypass the benefits of local citizen involvement. **The Legislature is not the appropriate place for this work. It’s intended as a local process, rightfully belonging to local jurisdictions and to the DLCD.** The process is already working in Roseburg – this runaround is not required.

Respectfully,

Robert Bailey Secretary  
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*Advancing policies, leaders and actions that  
protect Helvetia's treasured resources.*