

Friday, February 9, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Housing and Development
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street., NE
Salem, Oregon 97862

From: Deborah Lee
85045 Hawthorne Lane
Milton-Freewater, Oregon 97862

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson and Committee Members,

Re: SB1537 Please Vote **NO on UGB Expansions**

Our family lives in Eastern Oregon and has farmed there for over 152 years. We are the 2023 recipients of the Oregon Sesquicentennial Farm Award and have been in the Milton-Freewater area since 1867.

Our Farm Family does not support the proposed UGB expansions on SB 1537 which is one more step to inch the cities into our farm lands where we do our business and life's work! You have already taken and inch and gotten 20 miles and you need to manage your arrangement of expansions on what you already have, not take more of our farmland, we are already squeezed by interference into our places of work and farming operations bad enough already. We don't need more.

In case you did not know, agriculture and farming in Oregon is one of the largest state income producers. We contribute \$33.3 Billion dollars to the state's economic footprint. 86,240 employees directly engaged in Oregon's agriculture not to mention us, the managers and family farm members who work 24/7 to make a living and provide high quality crops for the masses in Oregon and around the world! 30% of our farms hire labor outside of the farm owners to keep our businesses rolling, in compliance, environmentally safe and beautiful for Oregon. Stop picking on us to solve your management problems, we have enough of them of our own! Figure it out, use your heads, not your land grab greed!

I agree with Roger Kay, President of the Friends of Marion County, even if I am from Eastern Oregon. His points are right on for us as it is for folks near Salem, Oregon.

1. SB 1537 is a reversal of our land use planning program which the Governor just hailed this Spring on the 50th Anniversary of SB 100.
2. The 2023 Legislature and the Governor has already bypassed our land use laws by passing SB 70 and SB 4. These bills have a cumulative effect on our irreplaceable farmland by permitting development unrelated to farming and timber practice.
3. SB 1537 continues this strategy by allowing expansions of urban development on even more farmland, 75 or 150 acres for each and every city in the State. LEAVE US ALONE, WE HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO FARM OUR LANDS HOMESTEADED BY OUR PIONEER ANCESTORS! We take care of the habitats, conserve our soils and manage our properties so that we can sustain them in a responsible way year to year.

4. SB 1537 actually expands the growth of urban uses since each application by a city will also include even more farmland when roads, sewer, water, and other utilities consume an additional 50% more farmland.

5. SB 1537 allows these expansions to continue for another 10 years which will hamper local planning departments from deciding where future infrastructure should go.

6. Oregon's cities have thousands and thousands of acres of vacant land that cities have designated for housing, but need infrastructure to develop. The infrastructure money in this bill, while a very good start, will not be enough for even these already-designated lands. Don't put these lands long-awaiting investment in competition with even more land, at the edge.

7. These public funds will build more housing, better-located near the things people need to get to every day, inside UGBs, where some infrastructure and schools, stores, and services already exist.

8. It has been said by the proponents that none of these urban reserves can be on to farmland - that is not true. Urban reserves consist almost entirely of land zoned for exclusive farm use. And these are NOT lands that will inevitably be urbanized - "urban reserves" is an overlay of where a UGB would expand if a need for additional land is demonstrated beyond current UGBs.

This law is a law that has not been thought by city slickers who have no reverence for the excellent job farmers do to protect Oregon year to year, working harder than you can imagine. We don't have cabins in the mountains or beach to take a weekend off, we don't have snow mobiles and campers to leave for vacations, we are at our farms working for the people of Oregon and the world to have safe and high-quality food for the world! What is wrong with your thinking? This is counter-productive and selfish and not thought out for the big picture!

Leave us alone, manage the land you have already taken from us. It will take some brain power and maybe even some hard work but you can do it, we do it every day!!!

CONCLUSION: REJECT UGB EXPANSIONS IN SB 1537

Sincere as I can be!

Deborah Lee
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