

Richard van Pelt

10 June, 2121

House Committee On Rules
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Opposition to SB 16 - Allows counties to rezone lands within Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region from exclusive farm use to residential uses.

Dear Chair Warner and Members of the House Committee on Rules

Woody Guthrie sang that “this land is your land and this land is my land.” I am not so sure. The Oregon Revised Statutes represents the cumulative wisdom of six or more generations of Oregonians. SB 16 seeks to craft a public policy that represents the interests of all Oregonians. It does not do this. When we craft as “public policy” legislation intended to satisfy the private interests of some Oregonians is not public policy.

Public policy is the political craft of setting out today what our grandchildren and their descendants will live with when you have passed on from this body. Legacy is how politics and public policy is judged by the future. This bill tampers with the land use legacy handed down to us through SB 100.

This bill reflects how little we appreciate what SB 100 accomplished and what it stimulated. Our land use policy gave us a recognition that we are Oregonians first, dependent upon the lands that nourish and sustain us environmentally, agriculturally, and economically.

The great and under appreciated legacy of SB 100 is that it brought into focus that we are Oregonians first, and property developers second. The great and good legacy of SB 100 is that it set for us a high bar requiring us to have a wider view of what we are than this bill does. This bill erodes and undermines what I believe it means to be an Oregonian and it dismisses and diminishes the legacy we have inherited and tarnishes that which we will pass on to our children.

This bill Idahoizes our eastern border. What it portends is that “if it is good enough for Nyssa it’s good enough for Newberg.” The review board is granted the authority to make non appealable decisions by a board that represents a narrow and private set of interests. This flies in the face of everything we have come to expect to protect the rights of affected citizens, namely Goal 1.

I urge you to reject this bill.