As a small scale farmer just getting started in rural North Plains, this land grad is so disheartening. I am attempt to farm on poor soil due to the lack of access to land and SB4 will make it even more difficult to access affordable quality land. Vote NO on SB 4.

I echo the words of Aaron Nichols of Stoneboat Farm:
Why we shouldn't develop more ag land north of Hillsboro:
The farm land in this area is some of the best in the world. The parcels being considered for development are class one and two soils. Oregon's land use laws are meant to protect these soils not just because they are near cities but because they are, for the most part, only near cities. Our best farmland is in the broad valleys west of the mountains - that's also where our cities were started and have grown. I think we've shown over the last 50 years that we can have both - growing cities with vibrant industries and productive farmland - but we have to be careful to manage that resource. The good farmland doesn't extend very far - out to about the junction of 6 and 26 is as far as it goes West in our area and it is a narrow strip of farmland left north of the metro area.
Here north of Hillsboro, we are already experiencing the effects of farmland fragmentation. Fewer people farm as land prices rise and the expansion of Hillsboro has almost cut us off from the farm land to the south and is beginning to cut us off from the farm land to the west. That means our last tractor dealership left a few years ago, it means I have trouble finding farmers to ask advice of or help from, it means that many hope their 100 acres will sell for 10 million dollars and aren't looking to pass it on to another generation of farmers. Farming is harder in these circumstances not because the land is bad but because of the way we've allowed cities to grow. Harder isn't impossible and many of us still farm out here. The trends in the world are toward more local production and that bouys us up even as we drive 40 minutes for a broken three point pin. I worry though that we are near the tipping point. The location of the sites considered would be very detrimental for keeping this area farmable - it cuts us off even more from the rest of the farming community. As these sites get developed the pressures to expand West Union will grow greatly, the pressure to build more housing in North Plains will grow greatly, the pressure to add space for chip processing suppliers will grow with every passing year. If we aren't up to the challenge of protecting farmland now, what makes us think we will be then?
This land was involved in the "Grand Bargain" a decade or so ago. There is still a lot of concern about how that transpired. Washington county was found by a judge to have used pseudofactors to take this land out of rural reserve as well as have a very poor public process. It left a lot of people on both sides of the issue feeling like the

process was unfair and not transparent - a flawed process to start with and then a very closed door, extraordinary legislative fix afterward when Hillsboro couldn't live with the judge's ruling. It was bad enough one time and has hurt the public trust in the process. To do it again a little more than a decade later, on the same land, would make it very hard to trust that this isn't going to become a every decade or so process. Farmland which is already unaffordable for most, will be priced for development assuming that if it's sold to the right person it can come into the UGB. Those prices aren't just unaffordable, they make the land unfarmable.

This lack of trust will be particularly strong here and will push us farther, if not over, the tipping point where farming isn't viable in Helvetia and inner North Plains. But it will echo around the state - surely other cities in the Metro area and beyond want more farm land and can find a compelling reason to take it. Across the state, landowners will notice, developers will notice, and farmers will notice.