



SAVE HELVETIA

13260 NW Bishop Rd

Hillsboro, OR 97124

February 2026

Opposition to Senate Bill 1586

Save Helvetia is a private non-profit advocacy organization that has been working for over 15 years to protect farm and forestlands in Washington County. We organized in 2010 during the Urban and Rural Reserves planning process, studying lands in and around the Helvetia area, and testified to Washington County, Metro, and LCDC. We studied the reserves laws and submitted excellent citizen science regarding the area we lived and worked in. Our testimony to Washington County, Metro, and LCDC, was rebuffed at each of the more than 35 hearings. Still confident in our position defending some of the best farmland in the world, we joined several appellants taking the reserves issues to the Oregon State Court of Appeals. The points we raised in testimony, along with 1000 Friends of Oregon, were eventually embraced by **the court's ruling which rejected and remanded Washington County's Urban and Rural Reserves plan.**

Washington County had deviated from the law in selecting lands to be designated Urban Reserve/Rural Reserve by using an outdated evaluation of soils and that discriminated against lands irrigated by creek, well, and sub-irrigation. Save Helvetia repeatedly testified to this effect. When HB 4078 was introduced, we contributed testimony. **The court ruled against Washington County, Metro and LCDC, explaining that statute and rule require careful attention to suitability and capability of the SOILS regardless of available irrigation.** We then participated in the negotiations that became amendments to the bill, creating the Grand Bargain. Five of our board members were participants and witnesses to the Sunday meeting in Hillsboro in February 2014, three days after the remand. **All involved governments and appellants entered into a settlement agreement, the Grand Bargain, that amended HB 4078.**

The Settlement Meeting of February 23, 2014

On a rainy Sunday afternoon in February 23rd 2014, select participants gathered for a non-public meeting at the City of Hillsboro's Civic Center. There was no public notice for this emergency. Attendees:

Andy Duyck, Chair of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners

Jerry Willey, then Mayor of the City of Hillsboro, now county commissioner

Tom Hughes, President of Metro, previously mayor of Hillsboro and then an industrial lands broker

Multiple Metro staff

The **mayors** from the other cities in Washington County

Richard Whitman from the Governor's Office,

Representatives Brian Clem and Ben Unger, legislators helping craft the "Grand Bargain" and on the House Natural Resources and Land Use Committee

Representative Joe Gallegos attended briefly at the beginning. The **Director** of the Oregon Farm Bureau

Mary Kyle McCurdy, attorney for 1000 Friends of Oregon and representing 3 farmers from the Washington County Farm Bureau's Land Use Committee: **Dave Vanasche, Larry Duyck, and Bob VanderZanden**

Bob Terry, county commissioner but representing the Oregon Nursery Association

The **Lobbyist** for the Homebuilders' Association, Tom Chandler

Greg Malinowski, county commissioner, had been alerted by Save Helvetia and came, but Duyck told him he had to leave as that put too many commissioners in the meeting for public meeting law standards **Board Members** of Save Helvetia include **Linda Peters (previously Chair of the Washington County Commission) Cherry Amabisca, Faun Hosey, Greg Mecklem, and Robert Bailey.**

After introductions, Whitman set the parameters for the discussions from the Governor's Office: if all supported this settlement, it would be a "**one and done**" **land use at the legislature**, that all governments would have to attest to the legislature that this was a one time land use legislation. **All parties must also agree that 75% of Metro Urban Reserves had to be used before any government could seek more urban reserves.**

Several side meetings occurred for the City of Cornelius (Mayor Jeff Dalen) and Forest Grove (Mayor Pete Truax), resulting in some amended boundaries and acreages and the promise of a state-funded library for the City of Cornelius. 2500 additional acres were added to Rural Reserves. The settlement discussions were attended by all elected representatives from the affected lands and their residents. None pushed back on the addition of acres to Rural Reserves. **None pushed back on the caveat that 75% of urban reserves would have to be developed, metro wide, prior to any jurisdiction seeking more urban reserves designations.**

The evolving HB 4078 was amended and maps were added to reflect the consensus of this meeting. The governments came before the legislature and swore support, signing on. The bill attracted bipartisan support and passed **unanimously**, moving to the Governor's Office for his approval.

The settlement assured speedy development in the South Hillsboro residential area and in the North Hillsboro industrial area, as the lands were designated UGB rather than the expected Urban Reserves. All of the jurisdictions were able to proceed with the development plans and receive timely stimulation of tax bases.

Save Helvetia incurred costs exceeding \$70,000 and logged over 10,000 volunteer hours to defend area lands from the county, regional, and state governments and agencies. And Save Helvetia has continued to uphold its mission to protect farmlands.

Breaches of the Settlement

Many of the property owners in the area north of Hillsboro and South of Highway 26, between McKay Creek and Storey Creek—"the 1700 acres"—have signed contracts with a developer. The area property owners organized as the Northwest Hillsboro Alliance in 2017 and are represented by Norm Ralston and Tom Vanderzanden. They had assumed that their lands would be brought into urban reserves in 2012 and never testified or developed "standing" in the reserves process. When their lands were designated Rural Reserves by HB 4078, **they falsely claimed that their development rights had been stolen from them.** They downplayed the attributes of their agricultural demographic: excellent Class 1 soils, ample water though subirrigation, 3 creeks and multiple and plentiful wells, established tile drainage, and connectivity to the adjacent agricultural infrastructure. Mr. Vanderzanden met with the board of Save Helvetia in a failed effort to win our support to destroy farmland. We also discussed the issues with him and the Alliance at a Citizen Participation Organization #8 meeting.

Some would later renege on their support of the settlement

County Chair Andy Duyck would refute the basis for the court ruling asserting that his interpretation of the law and rules were correct and within reason. He encouraged the county Farm Bureau to kick out the land use troublemakers who contributed to the

settlement. Yet he supported the negotiated settlement instead of attempting to redo the reserves planning.

Rep. Joe Gallegos would later advocate to have the Hodges' parcel removed from the settlement.

Senator Johnson would attempt to have some parcels in her district moved from rural to urban reserve (SB 186). The bill failed.

Senator Prozanski sought to bring in the Maletis property south of the Willamette River and offered 500 acres of rezoning for Washington and Multnomah Counties to attract broader support. That bill failed.

Not to be left out – and undeterred by the unanimous precedent of the HB 4078 settlement – Hillsboro area Representative now Senator Janeen, Sollman sought 4 times to rezone the 1700 acres through legislation. In 2017 as a freshman representative, she supported Johnson's SB 186; in 2018 she sponsored HB 4075; in 2021 she sponsored HB 2832; and in 2023 she packaged in Oregon's response to a nationwide effort. All efforts failed to change the Rural Reserve.

CHIPS and Science Act and Oregon CHIPs

In 2022, the national CHIPS and Science Act was a patriotic impetus that inspired Sollman to repackage her earlier efforts into what would become SB 4. Real concern for onshore chip production brought federal resources and grants into play. Sollman inserted herself into the CHIPS planning process where she co-chaired the Joint Committee on Semiconductors. The task of the committee was to provide benefit opportunities to communities across the State of Oregon. The 1700 acres appeared all but fast tracked, while 1000 Friends' research identified acreages inside of UGBs around the state that had already been readied for development. Were other communities eligible for the state's attention?

The final text of SB 4 pointed directly to the 1700 acres.

Over the next year, Sollman attracted the interest of Oregon's congressional delegation, most of whom were perhaps unfamiliar with the Urban and Rural Reserves deliberations leading to HB 4078. Only US Representative Val Hoyle (who in 2014 chaired the legislative House Rules Committee that took pledges of support from all parties to the settlement), and Governor Tina Kotek (who in 2014 was House Speaker) had experience with HB 4078. Again, Sollman represented the acreage as poor farmland constrained by lacking irrigation, and its proximity to urbanization... yet ideal in its proximity to the clutch of the technology sector in Hillsboro, the offshore data cables adjacent to the area, the expertise of the city to manage the level of development, and the presence of Intel.

In 2024, the City of Hillsboro would continue to find ways to break out of the settlement and trespass onto the protected Rural Reserves lands. Claiming to have gobbled up their generous supply of UGB areas in only 10 years, although hundreds of acres inside the city remain undeveloped, the city now turned to the protected Rural Reserve – and to Intel, and to the Governor – in an effort to grab additional land.

Never-mind that it is prime farmland, some of the best in the world. The Rural Reserve does not belong to the city, and they have no right to assume it is theirs. They cannot “give back” what they traded for in the settlement. They cannot un-bargain the Grand Bargain. The least they must do is respect the land and adopt policies that offer the protection due to farmlands in the Rural Reserve.

The City of Hillsboro has misrepresented the legislative consensus and the appeals court ruling, saying that the court found minor issues with the Reserves plan and once those were remedied, more land would become available to them. Their claim is false.

Oregon Land Use and SB 1586

Oregon land use law, as with any law, relies on many things: **adherence to rule, good faith and broad citizen participation** among them. **Good faith** in negotiated settlements is key. If parties renege, we lose trust in the law. In this case, the Urban and Rural Reserves legislation came about as a negotiation between farmers, cities, and developers seeking **certainty** in their future planning. They agreed that **certainty** was in their mutual interest. The Reserves legislation was passed, OARs were developed and a multi-year community process unfolded in the tri-county Portland Metro area. **Each party has a responsibility to act in accordance with agreements they made..**

But now, Sollman seeks to break all of that, to provide **certainty** for unknown, probably **imaginary corporations**. With SB 1586, the City of Hillsboro and Senator Sollman claim that Goal One, citizen participation, does not apply. They add that the land has been studied multiple times although the State Court of Appeals indicated proposals made prior to the ruling had not been made **legally**. The City and Sollman have no intention of engaging citizens and the community in this 1700 acre land grab proposal.

Sollman claims the land is locked up “in perpetuity.” Good idea, but it’s **not accurate**.

Washington County has illegally failed to adhere to the Reserves rules. The City of Hillsboro, greedy for more industrial land, and with vaulting hubris, is proud of their cleverness to advocate for this illegal action in the state legislature; a move that will throw-off the balance of planning in the Metro region. Sollman is complicit as a legislative advocate for the willing sellers in the area, partnering with the city’s development staff and some elected officials. Many parcels are multi-generational and

extended families are clamoring for a pay-out, but profits on investment are not guaranteed anywhere.

Please recognize that these **1700 acres are protected pursuant to a settlement agreement that resulted from an Oregon State Court of Appeals ruling and remand against Washington County**. In arguing their case, appellants had correctly explained that Washington County had not followed a legal process and this resulted in the misrepresentation of lands eligible for rural reserves protection. Appellants had expended countless volunteer hours and, unlike the jurisdictions, had to rely on community-based fund-raising to pay the legal costs asserting their citizen rights to participate and to appeal. While awaiting the ruling, appellants were willing to negotiate, at the request of then Mayor Willey. This was rejected by Washington County's Chair Andy Duyck. Washington County elected to enter into the negotiations rather than attempt to redo their Urban and Rural Reserves planning process.

In the legislative settlement of the remand, the City of Hillsboro obtained a massive green light to proceed to develop South Hillsboro and the North Hillsboro Industrial area – and they heartily agreed to it. Washington County agreed. Likewise, the State of Oregon benefited, in obtaining speedier growth of the tax base. The appellants made no effort to prolong or tie up the developments in South Hillsboro or the North Hillsboro Industrial area.

Following the unanimous, fully bipartisan support of the legislature as a “One Time Only” legislative land use decision, Governor Kitzhaber signed it into law.

The settlement was a **good faith agreement**. It underscored the values of citizen science and citizen participation and the right to appeal. It was an education for governments to abide by the reserves laws and rules. Good faith is required for possible future land use negotiations. Otherwise, the governments might breed what they fear most from land use: pointless litigation and the stalling of appropriate development.

The arrogance of some in the development community who say that only Hillsboro is where this particular development can take place – that only adjacent and protected prime farmland is where this development can take place – belittles the value of our Agricultural Resources while disregarding good faith, law, and reality. **There are other suitable large sites for industrial expansion inside UGBs in Oregon.**

The values accrued to the advocates were not wealth or the accumulation of power but the proper protection of farmlands under the law. **Now the legislature must again ratify that protection by stopping the effort to break it! Stop SB 1586.**

It is within your power to confer with participants in the settlement process to better understand its context and outcome: Richard Whitman, Governor Kitzhaber, Brian

Clem, Mary Kyle McKurdy. Study this well to assure that your decision is worth the associated costs and ramifications to Oregon's land use program.

Weigh the costs of breaching the settlement. What will it say about **government good faith**? What will it say about citizen participation and the rights of appeal? What will it say about **fairness**? You have the ability to support good land use planning by recognizing **lands already within urban growth boundaries across the state that are ready and available for this kind of development**. **SB 1586 is wrong, heart-breaking, and unnecessary.**

Heroes are not giant statues framed against a red sky. They are people who say: "This is my community, and it is my responsibility to make it better." Gov. Tom McCall

Robert Bailey,
Secretary for [Save Helvetia](#)

Faun Hosey
President for [Save Helvetia](#)

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