

January 20, 2010

To Council President Bragdon and Metro Councilors:

My name is Casey Schoch, I live at 24335 NW West Union Road, Hillsboro, OR. I am here tonight to urge you to protect our foundation farmland North of Hwy. 26 and south of West Union Road. I was signed up to speak at the December 15 hearing in Hillsboro in front of the Washington County Commissioners but did not get the opportunity to do so because the commissioners cut the hearing short.

My family and I live on our 78 acre dairy farm which is located directly across the street from 8F-S. This piece of land is currently being considered as "undesigned" land. There are numerous reasons that this undesigned zoning would be harmful to the Helvetia area and my family's dairy farm.

As our farm faces the future I have testified previously to you about our plan to build our own on site organic creamery and the \$100, 000 investment it would take. I am concerned that our farm would be across the road from a large block of undesigned land destined to become large industrial sites. These industrial sites use large amounts of water. Not only do the businesses themselves need a lot water but also all of the landscaping that surrounds them. Our current well is at 600 feet and we have dropped our pump down to 590 feet. Each time a new well is added in our area or excessive water is used, we are plagued with water problems. Our pump shuts down and the cows have nothing to drink. Each cow drinks about 30-35 gallons of water per day. The cows need water to survive. The static water level on our farm was 250 feet in 1970. It is currently at 500 feet. I believe that adding large industrial sites would deplete the water table in our area making it impossible for us to farm.

Noise is another consideration for us. Large scale industrial sites across the road would add large amounts of traffic, noise and possibly pollution. The milk cows are out to graze most of the spring, summer and early fall. They usually prefer to stay together as a herd and they like the quiet calm of the wide open spaces. It really is true what they say about Happy Cows, they are healthier and produce better milk. We would like to keep their pastures as serene as possible.

Undesigned land is detrimental to farming. If parcel 8F-S is zoned undesigned it opens the door to potential urban sprawl and much uncertainty. How can we make wise decisions today about our dairy's future when the land adjacent to ours is left undesigned? This undesigned land is basically only an extension of the urban reserves. It contributes to speculative purchases and high real estate prices and leaves little or no options for farmers. It makes long term investment decisions impossible.

Farming is a business of patience and experience. It takes time and determination to work the land and wait for the harvest. Many of the farms in the Helvetia area have been passed from generation to generation, including our own. As I think of my four sons, I would like to offer them a legacy that is much more precious than money. I ask you here tonight to think of what you would like to leave to your children and generations to come. I urge you to adopt the rural reserves proposed in the Agricultural/Natural Resource coalition map. It is the only map that saves the most farmland and once it is gone it can never be replaced.

Thank you for your consideration, Casey Schoch