

SAVE HELVETIA STATEMENT ON COURT OF APPEALS DECISION REGARDING URBAN AND RURAL RESERVES

Save Helvetia has been vindicated by the decision of the Court of Appeals that rejected Washington County's flawed, unlawful method for designating Foundation farmlands for urban development.

While the county demanded that citizens adhere to statutory standards, Washington County created their own overreaching methodology that used outdated soil reports emphasizing irrigation needs rather than water where needed in their attempt to justify development on prime farmlands. Another factor ignored by the county was the standard set in the reserves law to consider the pressures of urbanization (i.e. parcelization) when designating close-in high-value agricultural lands to be protected as defined by ODA guidelines.

Save Helvetia repeatedly attempted to present the facts related to the law's standards but were stymied by decisions made and maps devised behind closed doors prior to public hearings. As the court indicated, instead of following the law requiring the use of ODA soil standards, the county invented and applied, as the court termed them, "pseudo-factors" to pick and choose industrial lots for sale.

As an example, Area 8B adjacent to the Sunset highway, consists of 440 acres containing one of highest

concentrations of class I soils in the state of Oregon. The county designated the land for urban development despite it meeting the standards of having high concentrations of class I soils that are naturally irrigated, it is a large block, and it is under pressure from urbanization.

We are especially pleased that the voices of this community have been respected and acted upon by the Court of Appeals and we hope that it serves as an example for other citizen organizations and most importantly, for elected decision makers.