

**JEFF REARDON**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 48



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

6/22/2021

Timothy G. Sekerak  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol Building, H271  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation on SB 16

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

This letter explains my support of SB16, which allows the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region to convert 200 acres of land from exclusive farm use to residential uses.

I toured Ontario, Oregon, about three years ago and I clearly remember seeing the piece of land in question. It runs along a barren ridge that does not appear to be farmable and is unsuitable even for grazing. The ridge continues into Idaho, but there the ridge supports a number of homes with a view of the river. On one side of the river, the land is put to a productive use; in Oregon it sits vacant and unused. It very much appears that this particular acreage was misclassified when the maps for SB100 were drawn.

While touring Ontario, the need for housing was apparent. The city needs a place to build homes that will help keep their middle- to upper-income wage earners from moving across the river to Idaho. There are currently three affordable housing developments underway.

When coming to my decision on SB 16, I thought about the Oregon Farm Bureau's statement of neutrality on the bill, considering that they work hard to preserve working farm land. The Farm Bureau fiercely protects farmland, constantly pushing to find effective solutions for the housing crisis and for economic development, especially in Eastern Oregon. And they appreciated the improvements to this bill compared to the bill of two years which they did not support.



Many have stated a concern that this bill will set a precedent, but this is a unique situation. If you are imagining the rolling farms of Washington, Clackamas or other counties and that's what you're trying to preserve, this 200 acres is definitely not that.

I have been and continue to be a strong supporter of Oregon's land use system and I truly appreciate how well the system has worked since 1973 to help us make the best use of all lands for a wide variety of purposes. When considering the land quality, the need for more housing, that Ontario is adjacent to and must compete with Idaho, and the economic implications for the community, I decided to support SB16.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Reardon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

Jeff Reardon

State Representative – House District 48