

1000 Friends of Oregon Calls for Realistic Industrial Lands Plan in Central Oregon

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On Wednesday, 1000 Friends of Oregon appealed a decision by the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners to designate up to 1,900 acres in Central Oregon for large-lot industrial expansion, along with expensive taxpayer-funded road, water and sewer line improvements.

“This appeal isn’t about jobs, and it isn’t even about 1900 acres of land. It’s about making a realistic economic development plan based on solid facts. Plans like this drive public investment. We need to use Central Oregon taxpayers’ money wisely by focusing our investments on the land already open for development and the 450 additional acres that can be justified,” said Pam Hardy, the group’s Central Oregon Advocate. “There will be no difference in job creation, and the region could save millions of dollars in public investments.”

1000 Friends is a non-profit organization that promotes fact-based planning supporting cost-effective infrastructure and land development decisions. 1000 Friends believes that the county adopted the document without sufficient evidence to demonstrate a need for 1,900 acres of new large-lot industrial land in Central Oregon. Astoundingly, this proposal exceeds the 20-year large-lot industrial need forecast for the entire Portland Metro area, which has ten times the population and is expecting over 20 times the job growth projected for Central Oregon.

“We’re concerned whenever major land use decisions are made without factual support,” Hardy said. “This decision is especially troubling, because the county’s own data show that the targeted large businesses are losing jobs, not growing.”

“To attract the new employers it needs, Central Oregon can’t just set aside large areas of land for large-lot industrial purposes, hoping that major employers will just show up. It has to make significant, expensive investments. A plan with so little justification will overextend the region’s limited finances, without providing the high-quality infrastructure employers demand,” said Executive Director Jason Miner. “Which is a more reasonable way to plan for your financial future—to buy 50 lottery tickets or to make a realistic financial plan? We’re concerned that this plan is the equivalent of buying 50 lottery tickets for the region’s future.”

“We support the original vision of this plan: cities and counties strategizing together to create a better economic future for us all,” Hardy said. “We are still committed to that vision, but so far the county has chosen another route.”

1000 Friends hopes to work with the County to reach a settlement before the appeal is finalized.

For additional information on the appeal, please contact Pam Hardy, Central Oregon Advocate, at (541) 719-8221.