

Friends of
French Prairie

Friends of French Prairie
is an Oregon non-profit corporation

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October 7, 2015

President Tom Hughes
Metro Council
600 NE Grand Avenue
Portland, OR

Re: Remand of Stafford-Area Urban Reserves
LCDC Remand Order 14-ACK-001867 Metro Ordinance No. 11-1255

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the matter of the remand from the Court of Appeals' and the Land Conversation and Development Commission to Metro regarding the designation of the Stafford, Rosemont, Borland, and Norwood areas in Clackamas County as urban reserves under ORS 195.145.

While this hearing is focused on the Stafford area, we understand that the larger question of changing the designation of rural reserves in the French Prairie part of Clackamas County is likely to become part of the discussion between Metro and Clackamas County, and I will focus my comments there. Specifically I wish to address the misinformation campaign already afoot that seeks to convince people that the Langdon Farms golf course and surrounding ag land is comprised of "low quality soils."

To that end, the packet I brought for each of you begins with three maps prepared by the Department of Agriculture's Land Use and Water Planning office. The first map is for context, and shows the zoning for the entirety of French Prairie. It includes the small portion in the northeast corner within Clackamas County, and the rest in Marion County. Of note, outside of urban UGBs it is all zoned Exclusive Farm Use.

The second and third maps show the soil type distribution in French Prairie based on the USDA Soil Classification system, and you can see that almost all of French Prairie is Class 1 or Class 2 soil types. The difference between the two maps is “irrigated” versus “non-irrigated” and the point is that there is no change in soil classification as a function of irrigation water availability. You will also note that the Clackamas County portion is virtually all Class 2, with very little Class 3. In other words, very high quality soil.

The fourth page is a soil profile illustration from North Willamette Research & Extension Center showing that the soil type is Willamette Silt Loam, and the depth of various layers. The relevance here, in support of other testimony about the value of this farm land and the ag industry it supports, is that the most that can be claimed about the soils at Langdon Farms golf course is that the upper layer of soil were mixed when berms and sand traps were created during golf course construction.

Nothing changed about the soil type or its fertility. It is still among the highest quality soil in the United States. Suffice it to say, this is the underlying factual data that resulted in the original Rural Reserves designation for the Clackamas County portion of French Prairie.

Sincerely

Benjamin D Williams
President, Friends of French Prairie