

Oregon State Board of Agriculture: Resolution Detail

Title

Siting of Aggregate Mining Operations in the Willamette Valley

Background

Whereas 44% of the total value of Oregon's gross farm and ranch sales is produced in the Willamette Valley;

Whereas 40% of Oregon's high-value farmland soils and 78% of the state's prime farmland is located within the Willamette Valley;

Whereas prime farmland soils compose less than three percent of Oregon's lands;

Whereas aggregate sand and gravel mines are consuming about 350 acres of largely high-value farmland soils a year in the Willamette Valley;

Whereas viable aggregate resources can be and are currently found on lands deemed less valuable to agriculture and other natural resources such as "hard rock" quarries that are often located on soils less valuable to agriculture and other lands containing poorer quality agricultural soils;

Whereas farming poor soil is not an option for agriculture because agriculture is both land and soil dependent;

Whereas according to Oregon land use law it is only within the Willamette Valley that exceptions are provided to mine Class I and II agricultural lands;

Whereas state law permits reclamation of mining operations on lands zoned for exclusive farm use to either wildlife habitat or agricultural land;

Whereas most typical reclamation of mining operations is to wildlife habitat or "farm use" in the form of open ponds (for irrigation purpose) instead of to useable agricultural ground;

Whereas it is recognized that aggregate resources are important to many aspects of Oregon's economy.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Oregon State Board of Agriculture:

1. Does not support, in the Willamette Valley, the use and conversion of Class I, II prime or unique agricultural soils (as defined by the USDA Natural Resources Conversation Service) on lands zoned for exclusive farm use for the mining of aggregate unless it is shown that no reasonable alternative lands exist:

- (a) On land that is identified in an acknowledged comprehensive plans as an exception area or as non-resource land;
- (b) On resource land that is determine to be irrevocably committed to non-resource uses;
- (c) In an urban growth boundary; or
- (d) On resource land or lower capability for agricultural production as classified by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

2. When reasonable alternatives do not exist and Willamette Valley Class I, II prime and unique soils are required for needed aggregate production, the Board supports aggregate mining on agricultural land only upon a determination that the proposed mining and associated operations do not or can be mitigated to not adversely impact other farming operations in the area; and

3. When it is determined that mining operations are appropriate for siting on Willamette Valley Class I, II prime and unique soils, the Board supports requiring the reclamation of the subject lands back to farmland at the same quality as existed prior to mining activities.

Summary

Resolution Number

300

Subject

Land Use

Resolution Date

3/10/11

Date of Last Review

2/17/17

Committee

Land Use

Moved by

Laura Masterson

Seconded by

Tracey Liskey

Action

Motion passed

Status

- Active
- Inactive
- Revise

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Relates to aggregate mining on Class I & II soils in the Willamette Valley.

Notes

Resolution was reviewed and readopted on 2/17/2017.