Outlook

Port Westward Rezone Personal Comments

From Truett C. Stolzenburg <tstolzenburg@hotmail.com>
Date Fri 11/6/2026 3:02 PM
To Jacyn Normine <Jacyn.Normine@columbiacountyor.gov>

Hi Jacyn,

Below are my personal comments regarding the Port Westward Rezone Remand.

November 6, 2026
Columbia County Board of Commissioners
Re: Port Westward remand — PA 13-02 and ZC 13-01

Dear Commissioners:

My name is Truett Stolzenburg. I farm near Clatskanie and serve as a director of the Beaver Drainage Improvement Corporation (BDIC). I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity, separate from any statement authorized by the BDIC Board.

I recognize that industrial development at Port Westward can bring jobs and tax revenue. My concern is whether the industrial uses this rezone would allow, together with the wetland mitigation they could require, can coexist with the farms and shared drainage systems already here. A facility might be designed to manage water on its own site, but that does not tell us what will happen if associated mitigation changes water levels or restricts ditch maintenance elsewhere in the district.

To gauge the potential impact to agricultural uses near the proposed rezone, I think it's important to ask one simple question: **If developing one acre of rezoned farmland takes that acre out of production and requires four more acres of farmland for permanent wetland mitigation, what could those five acres have earned from farming, year after year?**

I'll use blueberry production as an example of agricultural production within the district, as several farms actively produce blueberries on acreage within the Beaver Drainage District. The USDA's 2025 Oregon blueberry figures give us a way to put the potential earnings impact question in dollars. At the statewide average of 12,500 pounds per harvested acre and $1.17 per pound, one acre in blueberry production represents about **$14,625 in annual gross farm revenue**. Under this scenario, one acre converted to industry plus four acres converted to mitigation would mean five

acres taken out of farming. That's **$73,125 in potential annual gross farm revenue forgone for each acre of rezoned farmland developed**, counting both the industrial site and its associated mitigation.

Now apply that same assumption to all **837 acres** proposed for rezoning. If all 837 acres were developed and each required four additional acres of mitigation on productive farmland within the district, that would mean **3,348 mitigation acres** in addition to the industrial acreage. The combined footprint would be **4,185 acres**, or about **73 percent of the district's 5,717 acres**. At the blueberry benchmark, **837 × $73,125 comes to about $61.2 million per year in potential gross farm revenue forgone**. Keep in mind, much of this potential revenue would be eliminated in perpetuity, per mitigation requirements in the state of Oregon.

That is a worst-case illustration, not a forecast. Rezoning alone does not take land out of production. The scenario assumes a regulated wetland impact on every developed acre and a four-to-one mitigation ratio; neither is established. It also does not mean that all of the affected land is currently planted in or suitable for blueberries. The figure is gross revenue before expenses, not profit or an estimate of current farm sales. A site-specific estimate should use actual crop acreage, soils, drainage conditions, yields, and prices. But the question remains: **If productive farmland is permanently taken out of farming, where does the County account for the crops those acres could have produced, the jobs that could have been created, and the potential positive impact on local businesses —not just in the year they're converted, but every year after that?**

The acreage calculation also leaves out farms that stay in production but could face higher water tables, slower drainage, or more frequent flooding. Those effects matter for blueberries and other crops that depend on well-drained soils. If permanent mitigation easements are proposed, the County should also determine whether BDIC can still access and maintain its levees, ditches, pumps, and other drainage facilities, including during emergencies, and who would pay to correct problems caused by the mitigation.

Before making a compatibility finding under **OAR 660-004-0020(2)(d)**, I ask the County to evaluate the reasonably foreseeable mitigation associated with the uses it would authorize, identify how much working farmland could be permanently taken out of production, and assess the effects on neighboring farms and shared drainage infrastructure. I also ask the County to evaluate mitigation outside the district and, if it relies on protective measures to find compatibility, to make those measures enforceable. If the record cannot show that a proposed use and its reasonably foreseeable mitigation are compatible with neighboring agriculture, I ask the County not to authorize that use on the current record.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Truett C. Stolzenburg
Clatskanie, Oregon