

Citizens of Aurora Meet to oppose HB 4092 – Controversial Aurora Airport Land Use bill



Jan Shea, opposing the proposed “carve-out” legislation, distributes informational materials to participants at the Aurora Town Hall on January 30th. More than 100 citizens attended to hear information about the proposal and about 15 people signed up to give 3-minute comments to the Aurora City Council and Aurora Planning Commission.

(Aurora) More than 100 citizens met at a Town Hall meeting on Wednesday night in Aurora to express their views concerning HB 4092, a bill which would “carve out” special land use rules to allow the development of an expanded runway at the Aurora State Airport. Citizen comments were 4 to 1 against the Airport bill.

The HB 4092 sponsored by Representatives Rick Lewis and Rich Vial, and Senator Fred Girod, is opposed by the City of Wilsonville and Clackamas County, and has over time seen overwhelming opposition from citizens who live near the Aurora State Airport. A community survey conducted on the “All Things Aurora” Facebook page had 97 responses, where 81 (83.51%) voted to oppose the legislation and 16 (16.49%) voted to support the Rep. Lewis “carve-out” legislation.

“Citizens of Aurora are saying that they do not support this special interest legislation which proposes circumventing the existing land use system,” says Jan Shea, spokesperson for the

group opposing HB 4092, and an Aurora resident. “This is the worst kind of “carve-out” bill which cuts off citizen participation and created special rules for aviation at the expense of agriculture and public process,” Jan Shea continued. “We want business and we want appropriate growth; we want elected officials who represent citizens; Rep. Lewis was appointed not elected, and I want to know whom he consulted in our community—he certainly didn’t consult us; we want open processes that include input from citizens,” she concluded.

Friends of French Prairie, a land use organization which protects the productive farmlands of the Northern Willamette Valley has put detailed information about the history of poor public process and attempts by a few airport land developers to manipulate the planning process to produce decisions which promote the development of the Aurora State Airport over the interests of local citizens who support agriculture and want to protect the quality of life in their rural communities from aggressive development of industrial land around the Aurora Airport. The materials can be found at <http://www.friendsoffrenchprairie.org/issues-airport.html>

“What we need is more balanced discussion, not one group running off to the State Legislature to get their way over the objections of a majority of local citizens,” Ben Williams, President of Friends of French Prairie said in an interview. “We are hopeful that reason will prevail in Salem and this very controversial issue will be sent back for discussion at the local level using the existing land use processes to consider expansion of the Aurora State Airport,” Williams concluded.