

March 31, 2026

From Blake DeFrance: (one of our FOCV Founders)

RE: The Governor signing the SB5820, Sponsored by Senator Adrian Cortes, and fully supported by the FOCV, FOCC, and CPC Coalition of neighbors. Our constant letters, emails, and telephone calls made the difference between success and failure. We are being heard, our opinions are being read, we are making a difference with our actions! Jan Kelly, President of FOCV.

“An ai summary of your work. Thank you! Thought this may be interesting to explain to the neighborhood what we’ve accomplished.” Blake DeFrance

### **The Legislative Reversal (SB 5517 vs. SB 5820)**

For nearly a decade, SB 5517 allowed Clark County to treat land within 500 feet of the PVJR short line as an exception to standard state conservation rules.

- **Under SB 5517 (2017):** Clark County was authorized to allow "urban-style" industrial and commercial development (fabrication, processing, and storage) on agricultural and forest lands, provided the business was dependent on the railroad.
- **Under SB 5820 (2026):** This bill removes that specific authority. Clark County is no longer permitted to maintain the FRDU overlay in its transportation element, and any development regulations that allowed for rail-dependent industrial uses on resource lands are being rescinded.

### **2. Impact on the Portland Vancouver Junction Railroad (PVJR)**

The PVJR operates the **Chelatchie Prairie Railroad**, a 33-mile county-owned line. The removal of the overlay fundamentally changes the intended economic future of this corridor:

#### **End of Industrial Expansion**

The original intent of the overlay was to turn the rail line into an "economic engine" by attracting heavy industrial users (like manufacturing or large-scale distribution centers) to rural areas of the county. Without the overlay, the land returns to its **Resource Land** designation, which strictly limits development to protect farming, timber, and mineral extraction.

#### **Restoration of Growth Management Act (GMA) Standards**

The "intended use" of the railroad must now align with standard rural development patterns.

- **Infrastructure Constraints:** Future development along the line will be restricted by the lack of urban services (like sewer and high-capacity water), which were previously being bypassed or modified under the FRDU rules.
- **Environmental Oversight:** The PVJR has recently faced scrutiny for environmental violations involving wetlands and water flow. The removal of the overlay reinforces the legal requirement to prioritize habitat and resource conservation over industrial expansion.

#### **Operational Focus**

The railroad’s primary "intended use" shifts back toward serving existing customers and perhaps limited agricultural transport, rather than acting as a corridor for new, large-scale industrial parks.

