



WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MARK WUSTENBERG, VICE PRESIDENT, DAIRY SERVICES, AND SARAH BEAUBIEN, DIRECTOR, SUSTAINABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP, ON BEHALF OF TILLAMOOK COUNTY CREAMERY ASSOCIATION

TO THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB 3249

APRIL 3, 2017

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mark Wustenberg. I've worked my entire career in the dairy industry. First, I worked as a practicing veterinarian and more recently in various executive roles at the Tillamook County Creamery Association (TCCA). My experience spans local, domestic and international farm and processing aspects of the dairy business. Over the years, I've served in both formal and informal advisory roles, including for the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

My name is Sarah Beaubien. I've worked in sustainability of agricultural supply chains and manufacturing plants for the past ten years. Through those years, I've worked on numerous public-private partnerships to address environmental, economic and social issues on farms locally as well as internationally.

We are submitting this testimony today to ask that you please vote in favor of HB 3249.

Tillamook County Creamery Association is a 108-year-old dairy cooperative, which is known for the quality of the products we produce and for our commitment to working collaboratively with a diverse set of stakeholders to solve complex problems. We hope that TCCA will be around for at least another hundred years, but we are concerned about some of the trends we're seeing, such as 1) the conversion of farmland to non-farm use, development, or fragmentation into parcels that are too small to support most profitable farm businesses; 2) the sale of farmland to investors who may hold the land for future development, consolidate farmland, or make less of a positive contribution to rural communities in which they do not live or work; and 3) rapidly rising farmland prices, which make it increasingly difficult for beginning farmers, or any person who makes their living primarily from farming, to afford land.

Dairy done right.

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As older farmers retire over the next two decades, 64 percent of Oregon's agricultural land will pass to new owners. How that land changes hands, who acquires it, and what they do with the land will impact Oregon for generations. HB 3249 establishes the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program (OAHP), which would help Oregon farmers and ranchers plan for succession and preserve their land for future generations. OAHP fulfills a long-identified need for a state program to keep agricultural land in production, help agricultural landowners conserve their lands and pass them on to the next generation, and protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat on working lands.

In conclusion, attention to agricultural land tenure is integral to building healthy economies, healthy environments, healthy people, and healthy communities across the state. Oregon hosts a mosaic of landscapes that include complex river systems, forests, prairies, grasslands, and active farm, forest and ranch lands. These landscapes support our state's economy and the health of our environment. The more tools available to support landowners, land trusts, and conservation partners in their ability to work across large landscapes, the better poised Oregon is to respond to emerging issues like declining rural communities, intergenerational land transfer, and the loss of open space and natural habitat on farmland.

Please vote in favor of HB 3249.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Wustenberg, DVM
VP Producer Relations

Sarah Beaubien
Director Sustainability and Corporate Stewardship

Dairy done right.