February 22, 2019

Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction

RE: HB 2020 – **OPPOSED**

Co-Chairs Senator Dembrow and Representative Power

I am Marie Bowers, a fifth-generation farmer, and I am **opposed to HB 2020**, Cap and Trade. My family has been farming in both Lane and Linn Counties for over 100 years. We primarily grow grass seed and other seed crops.

For over a century we have been caretakers of the land with each generation leaving the soil and environment better for the next. Our farm grows crops, invests in technology and adopts practices that reduce our overall environmental impact and carbon footprint. This bill does nothing to recognize the efforts we have made in order to be sustainable and viable for generations.

Farms are natural carbon sinks.
A 50 x 50 lawn sequesters enough carbon for a family of four, or enough oxygen for a family of four. There are over 400,000 acres of grass seed grown in Oregon. That covers almost 24,000 families. Keep in mind, these are only grass seed acres, there are over 16 million acres of farmland in Oregon; sequestering carbon. Oregon farmers are doing their part to combat climate change. *Plants use carbon dioxide to produce oxygen.*

Annual Ryegrass will save the world.
One of our primary grass seed crops we grow is Annual Ryegrass, which is used around the world for cover crops, cattle and sheep feed, erosion control and many more. Most recently it has been found to break up a hardpan-like soil known as fragipan. This allows for farmers to make their soil more productive, growing more with less. In the Midwest, Annual Ryegrass is doing its part to "suck up" extra nitrogen in the soil while keeping the soil in place. Annual Ryegrass cover crop has resulted in cleaning up rivers and improving yields, helping farmers do more with less.

Investing in technologies for viability.
Precision agriculture has changed our farm for the better. We started with tractors that "drive themselves" aka auto steer and most recently adding a fertilizer spreader that compensates for the speed of the wind. This type of precision ensures that we do not overapply crop inputs and maximize our overall efficiency. Our soil is our greatest asset and our goal is to improve and take care of it. We have invested in implements & tractors that allow us to decrease our compaction and the lower amount of times we go over the field. We have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on all these technologies so that we do what is best for the land.

Adopting farming practices to increase sustainability.
No-till farming has been part of our farm for decades, meaning we do not till up the soil and plant directly into last year's plant bed. However, this only a small percentage of our farm. We often volunteer crops, let it grow from seeds already in the ground, fields that have been the same variety for years and only planting them every few years. With our no-till to low tillage practices, we only actually ever disturb the dirt on approximately 20% or less of our farm each year. Basically, we drive the tractor as little as possible over each field. This has preserved our soil profiles as well as helped our yields as well as decreased how much fuel we use.

Doing the best for the environment is common sense for us and we are not the exception to the rule. Majority of us in farming and ranching strive to leave the land better than we found.

House Bill 2020 does not work for Oregon farmers.
This does nothing to recognize the decades, if not centuries, of efforts Oregon farm families have made to be responsible stewards of the land and soil.

Eighty percent of Oregon Agriculture leaves the state. This requires transportation of all types, from trucks and rails to ships. Increasing energy costs on the transportation sector will leave Oregon farmers at a competitive disadvantage. We cannot simply increase our price to China to compensate for high fuel costs. In fact, we should be encouraging China to buy more Oregon grass seed to help their environment out.

We will continue do our part to sequester carbon however we cannot continue if our costs are raised to an unsustainable level and our contributions to the environment are not recognized.