

COLUMBIA COUNTY FARM BUREAU TESTIMONY

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CARBON REDUCTION

February 27, 2019

Columbia County Farm Bureau Oppose HB 2020

Columbia County Farm Bureau opposes HB 2020 as drafted. Columbia County Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization of the Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (OFB). Columbia County Farm Bureau represents nearly 135 farm families in Columbia County. We feel that it is important for you to recognize that farmers and foresters reduce carbon emissions by growing their trees and crops.

Columbia County is a rural county with small farm operations scattered throughout the county and depend on markets that are 60 miles or more from their farms. Many of the supplies of fertilizers, parts, and fuels, etc. that are necessary for their operations also require them to travel as many miles.

Columbia County used to have a large number of cattle and dairy operations but when the Portland livestock yards were closed, and cattle had to be hauled to Woodburn, Eugene, The Dalles and Madras those operations were forced to sell their herds and go out of business. At the same time, dairies were too small for the Creameries to come to a haul their milk away and they had no place to sell their calves and cull cows close so as time went by they too sold out and now Columbia County has only one small organic dairy left.

Farmers have had to gear up and purchase their own trucks and equipment to be able to haul their other products to markets well outside of our county. The impact of the Transportation Package from 2017 with the rise of the fuel tax then and the increase of vehicle license fees, especially for heavy trucks, has already taken its toll on their bottom line. Farmers and Foresters are unique as they cannot just pass on their costs on to their customers. They are told what they are going to be paid not what they need or want.

There isn't much profit left in farm products to absorb many more of these taxes unless we can start asking our own prices. As it is, we question the rationality of continuing to farm since there isn't any income left, and the time commitment, effort, and risk doesn't provide as much return or security as a minimum wage job. However, somebody has to produce-we can't all be consumers. With HB 2020 another set of tax increases not only to the farmers but to all of their suppliers that they depend on and who **will** pass those increases we will not be sustainable.

The negative effect of HB 2020 will also pass onto everyone who lives in Columbia County from their power bills to heat their homes, fuel for the transportation to and from work and/or vacations, the increased costs of everything they buy that has to be transported. All of these costs, which many will be hidden, will lower their quality of life and ability to feed and raise a family.

One question you should ask yourselves, will farmers continue to farm? **As we said earlier, we have already lost our cattle and dairy industry, will this be the thing that puts the final peg in our farmers' coffin.**

Finally, we believe that agriculture is a solution to sustaining and improving our environment. We are innovative and increase our efficiencies and optimize the resources we use. Please don't vote for HB 2020 which would punish those who have taken proactive measures to increase water, fuel, nutrient, and input efficiencies and discourages future investments.

Columbia County Farm Bureau opposes HB 2020 as drafted. Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue. For more information, please contact Marie Gadotti CCFB President at mariegadotti@centurytel.net or Jonathan Sandau with Oregon Farm Bureau at sandau@oregonfb.org.

Sincerely,

Marie Gadotti
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