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Senate Committee on Business and Labor

OFB Testimony on SB 468 and SB 469

March 8, 2021

Chair Riley and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Farm Bureau writes to register some concerns with HB 468 and HB 469. By way of background, the Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is the state's largest general agricultural trade association, representing nearly 7,000 farm and ranch families in the state.

While we do not have a position on the bills, we want to register our concerns that the bills as drafted have the significant potential to open agricultural co-ops up to sharing proprietary information in a manner that makes it likely that information would be disclosed both to competitors of the business and to outside parties who wish to do harm to agricultural businesses. Existing statutes provide important business record protections that are not part of these bills.

If the bills do go forward, we recommend including protections that ensure that any proprietary or business information that is disclosed to the general membership is protected from further disclosure by any members who receive it and to ensure it doesn't fall into the hands of third parties who are not part of the agricultural co-op.

Separately, we are concerned that SB 468 would expose farmers who serve as officers on a co-op board to new civil liabilities with few protections. We understand that this construct would be unique to agricultural co-ops and could create issues finding members to volunteer to serve on the boards of agricultural co-ops.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 468 and HB 469 and please contact us if you have any questions.

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