

Chair Senator Michael Dembrow, Vice-Chair Senator Chuck Thomsen and Members of the Committee: I'm writing in support of SB 404. I own a business (Genuine Wallowa County dba GWC Provisions) that sells food items that are grown in Wallowa County mostly, plus a few items from the Pacific NW, to individuals living in or visiting Wallowa County. One of my business's main goals is to increase my region's economic resiliency by creating a short value chain. Another is to increase my region's environmental resiliency, and increasing both the number of smallholder farms and the amount of organic farming will help to meet that goal. Oregon State University's Small Farms program has been a great asset to Oregon's agriculture and community food systems, and should be supported in every way possible. Adding new positions at ODA will strengthen the department, which is currently mainly focused on exports (as is Business Oregon). Exports are a great economic boon for a handful of large farms, but do nothing to support small farms nor to feed Oregonians. If COVID taught us nothing else, it has taught us the importance of regional resiliency. Please support SB 404. Thank you.