



March 12, 2021

State of Oregon  
Senate Committee on Education  
900 Court Street NE Room 453  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Testimony – Senate Bill 404-2** instructs Oregon State University Extension Service to establish certain new positions related to organic production and maintain certain existing position related to organic production.

Dear Chair Dembrow and committee members,

Organic Valley | CROPP Cooperative strongly supports the provisions and investment Senate Bill 404 provides to the organic sector and the state of Oregon.

Our marketing cooperative maintains a strong presence in the Pacific Northwest. We source milk from 33 organic dairy farmers in Oregon and employ up to 50 people at the Organic Valley McMinnville Creamery located in McMinnville, Oregon. We also have valuable co-processor relationships, along with retail sales of our branded organic products and private label and ingredient sales.

The provisions as amended in the Senate Bill 404 1) enhance Oregon State University extension efforts with additional organic specialists, 2) broaden the choice of organic food in feeding programs, 3) enable a state-wide market and economic analysis of the organic sector, and 4) bolster the state department of agriculture's capacity to focus on growing organic trade and soil health. These are strategic investments that give a business like ours confidence in the position we have taken in the state.

These policy measures build on past efforts at the state legislature and demonstrate a realization that organic agriculture will continue to grow and provide economic and environmental returns. Given our reach in 34 states with nearly 1,800 farmer-owners, it is our view that this public investment sets Oregon in a unique class of only a couple states that are being this intentional about growing organic commerce.

We stand ready to support these investments and look forward to working with the land grant university as well as state agencies to ensure the organic sector creates prosperity for farmers and businesses in Oregon.

We appreciate the work of the Senate Committee on Education and welcome the opportunity to answer any questions. Please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Steve Pierson  
CROPP Cooperative Board Member  
Sar-Ben Farms Inc.  
St. Paul, Oregon  
steve.pierson55@gmail.com

Adam Warthesen  
Director of Government & Industry Affairs  
adam.warthesen@organicvalley.coop