

Chair Senator Dembrow, Vice-Chair Senator Thomsen and Members of the Senate Committee on Education.

We are writing in support of SB 404-2.

We are the owners of Trillium Forest Farm, in Eagle Creek, Oregon and have been farming timber, Christmas trees, fruits and vegetables organically on our land for nearly forty years.

We believe that healthy soils practices are aligned with organic practices and provide a variety of benefits that are important to farmers and ranchers. In addition to increasing productivity, water retention and pest and disease prevention, healthy soil practices can also sequester carbon in the soil and depending on the practices, can reduce farmers' energy use and reduce fertilizer-related greenhouse gas emissions. They also help farmers and ranchers stay resilient in the face of changing and unpredictable climate conditions.

SB 404-2, will provide targeted investments to assist Oregon farmers interested in transitioning to organic practices.

SB 404-2 will also create a new Soil Health Specialist position in the Oregon Department of Agriculture, providing in-house expertise at ODA to improve soil health on Oregon's agricultural lands. This new Soil Health position at ODA would support implementation of ODA's climate change plan which is aligned with the new Oregon Climate Action Plan. This position is needed now more than ever, to give Oregon producers tools with which to improve soil health practices that will help mitigate rapidly changing climate conditions we are all experiencing.

Thank you for your consideration.

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