

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

My name is Helena Tesselaar and I live in Portland, OR. I am writing in support of SB 404-2, the Oregon Organic Action Plan, which seeks to increase organic production in Oregon.

Why do I support to increase organic production?

Organic production is good for the environment, in multiple ways:  
it sequesters carbon thus it is good to combat climate change;  
It is grown closer to the market thus creates less transportation pollution;  
It is better for the earth, as more crops are grown that add nutrients to the soil (rather than a monoculture crop which depletes the soil and relies on artificial fertilizers which kill the soil).  
Compared to mono crop farms, they rely on muscle labor rather than machine labor, again reducing pollution.  
And it conserves water.

Organic production is better for health:  
Organic products have higher nutritional value;  
No pesticides are used, thus it is better for both those who grow and handle the food, as well as those who consume it (we have seen a lot of covid outbreaks in those working with pesticides!);

Organic production is sustainable:  
It takes care of the earth and allows the earth to take care of us.  
Organic, local production makes us less vulnerable to the world food supply. Something that we very much need in these times of great change.

Organic production can help Oregon rebuild post-pandemic:

Organic is the fastest growing sector of the U.S. food industry and consumer demand for organic products has grown exponentially. In 2018, organic sales hit a record breaking \$52.5 billion, representing almost 6% of all food sold in the U.S;  
Organic farms hire more people per acre and they work more days of the year;  
When there are two or more counties with organic production, they become organic hotspots where median household income rises by over \$2000 and poverty decreases by 1.3 percentage points;  
Food production remains under local control rather than national or international control;  
Increased hotspot formation is directly tied to outreach, exactly like the kind provided by OSU Extension, which SB 404-2 seeks to expand;  
Organic agriculture is a bright spot in our economy and provides jobs in rural communities and improves farmers' incomes;  
These are jobs that can and should be created here in Oregon, rather than relying on imported organic products;

For all the above reason, I care about organic agriculture.

Sincerely,

Helena Tesselaar  
Portland, Oregon