Testimony in Support of HB 3317
March 25, 2021

Much of the grass seed grown here is known as perennial as it produces multiple seasons. After harvesting the seed, the leaves and stems need to be removed from the field also as they cannot be burned in place any longer because of smoke issues. They cannot be tilled into the soil as it would destroy the perennial crop. Left on the surface as mulch, increases plant diseases and rodents.

Fortunately, there is ready market in Asia for the residue if the delivered cost is low. 40-foot shipping containers have historically come to our west coast ports with imported merchandise and were returned empty. Shipping companies benefit from having something to bring additional revenue.

Rates to Asian ports are on a per container basis so shippers of residue need to pack as much as possible into each container.

Customers usually require baled material in packages that can be hand carried or about 60 lbs. each. About 950 bales will fit in each container.

There is no practical method of making these dense bales in the field as the power requirement is so great. The best method requires a 2-step baling process. First step uses a conventional large hi-capacity big baler to remove the residue quickly and efficiently. This allows rapid transport to storage facilities as weather damage will render it unusable.

Step 2 baling can be done at a much slower rate and at the time of loading directly into shipping containers. This step requires much more compacting force and requires the large bales to be split into smaller sizes to enable baling at the density required. A field bale has a density of 10-12 lbs. per cubic foot whereas a recompressed bale will be at 25 lbs. per cubic foot.

Since the 2nd baling process can be done year-round, fewer of these expensive machines are needed and are placed strategically for short hauls from the fields. These balers are usually electrically powered so are not easily moved around due to large electrical requirements.

I hope this helps with understanding the process that has helped keep Oregon green!

I am happy to answer any of the committee’s questions.

Stan Steffen