



## Testimony on HB 2724

### House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

April 6, 2021

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2724. While we appreciate the positive intent behind HB 2724 and the -1 amendments, we have significant concerns about whether the bill is ready to move forward this session, whether it actually serves an existing need, and whether it will actually function as intended.

In talking to the proponents of HB 2724, we understand that they intend to set a table to facilitate resolution of some of Oregon agriculture's most contentious issues and ensure that there is agreement on these issues before they reach the legislature.

While this is a noble goal, in reviewing both HB 2724 and the -1 amendment, we have concerns about whether the bills will actually accomplish the stated goal, and whether that is something that is possible without agreement from a very large number of entities, from the governor's office to the legislature to other stakeholders. As it stands, we have posed at least 15 critically important questions about the bill's intent and impacts that remain unanswered. Chief among these are clarifying the role of this committee as it relates to the Board of Agriculture, which advises the Department on agricultural issues, as well as the dozens of commodity commissions and several standing advisory committee the Department already has on issues. Further, we are unclear how this committee will go about getting buy off from key elected officials responsible for setting policy direction in Oregon, including the legislative body and the Governor's Office. We are also concerned that committee proposed by the -1 amendments does not include 6 of the top 10 agricultural commodities from last year.

While we appreciate and share the desire to have greater education and consensus among all relevant stakeholders on key agricultural issues in the state, we are not sure that HB 2724 will move us toward accomplishing that laudable goal, and we believe there are more effective ways the state could accomplish those objectives. To that end, we do not believe that HB 2724 is ready to move forward this session, but would love to engage with proponents and this Committee to discuss better pathways to achieving consensus on agriculture's most contentious issues.

Oregon Farm Bureau  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Association of Nurseries

Oregon Wheat Grower's League  
Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers  
Oregon Seed Council