

May 1, 2021

Senator Betsy Johnson
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward
Representative Dan Rayfield
Co-chairs, Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon State University Extension Funding

Dear Senators Johnson and Steiner Hayward, and Representative Rayfield,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the importance of the Oregon State University Extension Service.

OSU Extension's small farms and local, regional, and community food systems programs have been working collaboratively with Oregon farmers, ranchers, food businesses, and a wide range of food system organizations for many years to build more resilience, health, and equity into the food system. Together, we responded quickly to the pandemic, while continuing the ongoing work, and in this recovery period we are reshaping Oregon's food systems for the better.

Examples of our collective accomplishments are:

Supporting the long-term success of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and food justice organizations: BIPOC-led food and farming organizations in Oregon continue to lead the way to more resilient food systems that meet crucial food needs as well as the economic development needed for long-term recovery. These include the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition, Mudbone Grown, Adelante Mujeres and the Coalition for the Advancement of Latino Farmers, Black Futures Farm, Black Oregon Land Trust, "Growing Tribal Farms" on the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and others. OSU Extension's small farms and food systems team collaborates with these organizations through applied research, education, technical assistance, and outreach.

Direct market producers and local food systems: Oregon is nationally known for our strong local food sector with many diversified, direct-market farmers and ranchers selling a variety of food and other agricultural crops. Extension has been supporting the growth and success of the farmer and food businesses in this sector for decades with research and education focused on production, marketing, and business management, all done in collaboration with many local and statewide organizations focused on this sector and these producers. Our programs and partnerships were crucial when COVID-19 hit, to assist farmers as they quickly adapted, in coordination with support organizations and agencies around the state. Oregon's Local Food Hub community of

practice and the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network provided essential supply chain support for aggregation, processing, and distribution.

Community-based food systems: We continue our collaborative work with organizations who have been building strong, resilient, healthy, community-based food systems around the state—for household and community food security and local economic development and equity. The Oregon Community Food Systems Network consists of 56 statewide and community-based nonprofit organizations that represent hundreds of thousands of Oregonians, in rural and urban parts of the state. OSU Extension is a trusted partner for the network and, with Oregon Food Bank, serves as an institutional backbone organization, contributing research, education, outreach and engagement, and financial resources.

The Governor’s Recommended Budget flatlines the Statewide Public Services programs—OSU Extension, Agricultural Experiment Station, and Forest Research Laboratory. This equates to a 7.42% cut from the 2019-21 budget. We are asking you to support \$158.5 million in operational funding for the OSU Statewides, which includes \$61.9 million for OSU Extension.

Reducing Extension programs that directly support local, regional, and community-based food system development will slow the progress we are making toward resilience and equity, not just in pandemic recovery but in the long run.

We recognize you have difficult decisions to make. We ask you to remember that maintaining the investment in OSU Extension will have a lasting impact on Oregon’s people, communities, and economy.

Sincerely,



Edward Hill
Director
Black Food Sovereignty Coalition



Jamese Kwele
V.P., Organizational and Food
Systems Equity
Ecotrust



Shantae Johnson
Farmer/Program Manager
Feed'em Freedom Farm



Amy Wong
Policy Director
Friends of Family Farmers



Stacy Kraker
President
Oregon Organic Coalition



Chris Schreiner
Executive Director
Oregon Tilth



Katy Giombolini
Food Systems Manager
Oregon Food Bank



ROGUE FARM CORPS

Abigail Singer
Executive Director
Rogue Farm Corps



Kelly Crane
Executive Director
Oregon Farmers Markets Assoc



Holly Hutchason
Executive Director
Pacific NW CSA Coalition



Ashley Rood
Co-Director
Oregon Climate & Agri. Network



Molly Notarianni
Executive Director
Farmers Market Fund



Lauren Sorg
Executive Director
Food Roots



Kirsten Miller
Executive Director
Ten Rivers Food Web



Sarah Sullivan
Executive Director
Gorge Grown Food Network



Bridget Cooke
Executive Director
Adelante Mujeres



Katrina Van Dis
Executive Director
High Desert Food & Farm Alliance



Greg Holmes
Food Systems Program Director
Southern Oregon Advocate



Jessika Tantisook
Executive Director
North Coast Food Web