



February 2, 2022

State of Oregon
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony – Senate Bill 1532: A bill to 1) create five Oregon State University Agricultural Extension Agents; and 2) initiate a market analysis on the economic impact of the Oregon organic industry

Dear Chair Golden and committee members,

Organic Valley | CROPP Cooperative strongly supports the provisions and investment that Senate Bill 1532 provides to the organic sector and the state of Oregon.

Our marketing cooperative maintains a strong presence in the Pacific Northwest. We source milk from 33 organic dairy farmers in Oregon and operate the Organic Valley McMinnville Creamery located in McMinnville, Oregon. We also have valuable co-processor relationships along with retail sales of our branded organic products and private label and ingredient sales in the state.

The provisions in Senate Bill 1532 enhance Oregon State University (OSU) extension efforts with five additional agricultural extension over the next two budget cycles. The bill also initiates a market analysis of the organic industry's statewide economic impact by the Oregon Business Development Department.

These strategic investments provide businesses like ours confidence in the position we have taken in the state.

Regional variability requires an approach that is localized at land grant universities and builds on the OSU Extension Service framework. For example, research and experiential education with Oregon organic dairy farmers on appropriate high-protein feedstuffs would be of great benefit. It could help reduce dependence on out-of-state feed sources and bolster gains from more regional production. This body of work is much more than an integrated pest management need for organic production. It may encompass crop varietal trials, basic organic standards adoption such as crop rotations and fertility management as well as market facilitation and the related value-added processing needs and storage for organic commodities.

These extension positions also have the added advantage that they can service conventional and organic producers similarly. Some organic practices like cover crops, crop rotations, grazing, and soil health measures are increasingly of interest for many farmers seeking adaptive and resilient techniques anchored in biological cycles that can help mitigate volatile weather conditions.

These policy measures build on past efforts at the state legislature and demonstrate an understanding that leveraging farm practice knowledge among producers will continue to provide economic and environmental returns for Oregon. Given CROPP Cooperative's reach in 34 states



with nearly 1,700 farmer-owners, it is our view that this public investment sets Oregon in a unique class of only a couple states that are being this intentional about growing organic practice adoption on farms.

We stand ready to support these investments and look forward to working with the land grant university and state agencies to ensure the agricultural sector creates prosperity for farmers and businesses in Oregon.

We appreciate the work of the committee and welcome the opportunity to respond to questions. Please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen R. Pierson'.

Steve Pierson
CROPP Cooperative Board President
Sar-Ben Farms Inc.
St. Paul, Oregon

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Adam Warthesen'.

Adam Warthesen
Director of Government & Industry Affairs
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