

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 4048

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Cate, Vice-Chair Kropf and Members of the Committee:

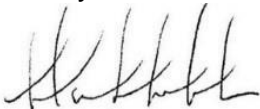
My name is Alan Lewis and I represent Natural Grocers, a 66-year-old family-run health food chain operating 14 organic supermarkets in communities across Oregon. I am writing to ask for your support for HB 4048, "Emerging Sector" legislation that includes an economic assessment of Oregon's organic sector.

Natural Grocers has a particularly strong interest in organic livestock and crop production, since we only sell produce that is USDA certified organic and we focus on sourcing local organic eggs, dairy, meat, and other products. The Pacific Northwest offers abundant opportunity for organic producers, but the economic potential of the sector has not been fully realized due to lack of coordinated resources.

Farming, livestock production, and processing are important sources of economic activity for the Oregon economy and provide significant opportunities for family businesses to participate in the wider economy. The desire to start organic farms in particular is well known. However, the ability to measure and understand the organic sector is critical to developing the entire food supply chain for Oregon, so farmers can access capital confidently and make a living reliably.

A comprehensive economic assessment of Oregon's organic sector will help identify opportunities that highlight the state's competitive advantages and needs for the future, and to help secure additional private investment. Having an economic assessment of Oregon's organic sector will help Natural Grocers and other retailers develop and access more products grown and processed within the state. Organic agriculture can be used as an effective economic development tool, especially in rural areas, by improving the food system for all producers.

Thank you,



Alan Lewis, VP Natural Grocers  
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*Operating Certified Organic Markets in Medford, Salem, Beaverton, Bend, Corvallis, Gresham, Clackamas, Eugene, Portland Powell, Warrenton, MLK, Coos Bay, Tigard, and Klamath Falls*