



**HUMMINGBIRD WHOLESALE**  
*Nourishment with* **INTEGRITY**

February 6, 2022

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

My name is Charles Tilt. I am the co-owner with my wife Julie of Hummingbird Wholesale in Eugene, which distributes foods grown under Organic certification to grocers, restaurants, and food producers throughout the Pacific Northwest. I am writing to ask for your support for the HB 4048 “Emerging Sector” legislation that includes an economic assessment of Oregon’s organic sector.

Although organic products are growing in popularity, with the total value of Oregon’s organic agricultural products sold increasing by more than 90% to \$454 million from 2014 to 2019, the industry remains in its infancy as compared to its potential; as measured by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, certified organic farms currently only represent 2.8% of total farmland in Oregon.<sup>1</sup> Currently, organic farms are at an economic disadvantage as compared to their conventional counterparts in that the full economic costs and benefits of each method of agricultural production are not accounted for in the farms’ production costs. Organic farming offers superior positive externalities such as the promotion of human and ecosystem health, whereas conventional farming causes negative externalities in both of those areas through its use of pesticides, nitrogen fertilizers, and allopathic treatments in livestock farming. Several surveys have found that organic farming contributes less to biodiversity loss, sequesters more carbon, uses less energy, and produces less waste than conventional farming. A case exists, therefore, for state support of organic agriculture to help level the economic playing field, contributing to both human and ecological health in the process.

Ultimately, the Oregon and world economies will need to become environmentally sustainable in order for humans to continue to exist on planet Earth. Having an economic assessment of Oregon’s organic sector would contribute to our understanding of how our state can transition toward economic and environmental sustainability, potentially with state support. An opportunity exists with such an assessment to reimagine what a truly sustainable Oregon could look like – with organic agriculture as its bedrock. Organic agriculture can also be used as an effective economic development tool, especially in rural areas – regardless of whether farmers choose to certify all of part of their farms.

Thank you for your attention to this legislation. I wholeheartedly encourage you to support HB 4808.

Sincerely,

Charles P. Tilt  
Co-Owner, Hummingbird Wholesale  
Eugene, Oregon

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<sup>1</sup> *Oregon Agriculture, Food, and Fiber: An Economic Analysis*, Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences, August 2021, p. 7, available at [https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/main/about/oragecon\\_report\\_2021.pdf](https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/main/about/oragecon_report_2021.pdf).