

Members of the House Committee on Revenue:

My name is Anna Jesse. I am a 3rd generation farmer working on my family's farm - Forest Hills Farms, Inc. - in Cornelius, Washington County. We are a diverse operation managing 1800+ acres of Blueberries, Black Raspberries, Wine Grapes, Wheat, Grasses for Seed, Clovers for Seed, Sweet Corn, and a few various other things depending on the year and our rotational needs. It is the ability to diversify our crops that has allowed us to maintain a sustainable business for the last 3 generations and hopefully many more to come.

We feel exceptionally fortunate to farm in Oregon's Willamette Valley. It's wide range of supported crops (over 220 recognized commodities) is what makes it special, but is what also makes it one of the last few places in our country where family farms are still hanging on and making ends meet. Of those many recognized commodity crops being grown here, many are specialty crops that are not able to be grown in many, if any, other places in the world.

A specific example for you to consider today is Blueberries. Most other places across the country and worldwide blueberries are treated like a large commodity crop, but that is not the case in Oregon. Oregon is the only state allowed to export fruit to Japan, and one of the only states allowed to export fruit into many other countries, including South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, China, etc. The requirements to export this fruit are unlike anywhere else. We have built our business on the back of niche market blueberries and aid in supporting 85% of the Japanese fresh blueberry market in Oregon's production season. We have fields specifically marked and grown for South Korea, Japan, and many other places.

In any given year, the commodities we grow are sold to wholesalers, commodity brokers, and processors. These groups take our product and push it further into domestic and international markets. Currently, Oregon law allows farmers to more accurately calculate their CAT tax liability when comingled commodities are sold to brokers and wholesalers and then sold out of Oregon. However, this is not the case when it comes to selling our commodities to processors. We do not have any bargaining footage for our fruit sold to processors to offset our CAT.

We request that the Committee support Oregon agriculture by choosing to support HB 2142. It is a well-known fact that farmers are price takers, forced to operate with continually shrinking margins. Passing HB2142 is an opportunity to fix what was intended with the HB4202 clarifications for farmers and ranchers. This correction will allow farmers to plan better and therefore weather the everchanging economic storm that impacts us so heavily.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anna Jesse