



Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District

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Chair Helm and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2998, which establishes the Oregon Soil Health Initiative to leverage existing programs and expand resources to support farmers and ranchers with soil health practices that make the most sense for their land and businesses.

Agriculture drives Wheeler County's culture, economy, and land conditions.

The bill would give Soil and Water Conservation Districts like ours the capacity to promote soil health principles and practices to Oregon's agricultural communities by:

- providing training and education for agricultural producers to promote soil health across this state's diverse regions and production types;
- collaborating with local partners and landowners to promote soil health demonstration projects to showcase practices and build statewide awareness and understanding; and
- highlighting existing soil health improvement efforts by Oregon farmers and ranchers.

The Healthy Soils Bill would give us the capacity to do this work to support farmers and ranchers in our county.

Thank you for your support of HB 2998.

Sincerely

Cassi Newton
Administrative Manager
Interim District Manager
Wheeler SWCD