

## Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 530 – The Natural Climate Solutions Bill

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Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod and members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

We are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 530. This bill is a huge step forward in combating climate change and leveraging available Federal funds that can support small rural Oregonian land stewards who are uniquely positioned to naturally sequester carbon in our forests, ag lands, wildlands and watersheds.

My husband Ron and I are small woodlot owners and organic regenerative agricultural market gardeners who live in rural southern Oregon in southeastern Jackson County up at 4700 feet in an area known as the Greensprings. We own just over 400 acres of mixed forest in Jackson and Klamath counties and EFU farm land which we manage sustainably, concentrating on forest health, carbon sequestration in soil and trees, regenerative agriculture and timber production. What we have witnessed in die off of trees here in southeastern Jackson County, due in large part to decreased snow pack, increased and prolonged heat, drought and milder winters causing tree mortality due to bug infestation, **has been significant**. We are in an area ripe for fire, and so we, along with many of our neighbors, have worked with USDA's NRCS federal grants to conduct thinning, fuels reduction and tree spacing for optimal forest health on our properties.

Senate Bill 530 is a common-sense bill that sets up a mechanism by which dollars can be leveraged and funneled to successful small farm and woodlot owners, that intensively manage their properties with a sharp eye to measurable carbon sequestration. By concentrating dollars towards natural lands solutions, Oregonians benefit and are encouraged to do their part in tackling the huge need to draw down atmospheric carbon that is causing the worst of the climate disruption. It is a proactive approach that is both productive and helps preserve and enhance our working lands.

We believe that small Oregon land owners, that have a vested interest in maintaining both production and best practices land stewardship, should be the beneficiaries of monies brought in through the Natural Climate Solutions bill.

In our own market garden practices, our goal is soil carbon sequestration while producing vegetables and fruits for local consumption in our neighborhood. We compost locally sourced materials, adding that on top of the soil in no till methods and are now moving more toward establishment of permaculture food forests where the buildup of naturally occurring humus in the soil helps with water retention and even greater produce generation and carbon sequestration. **These practices can be supported on a much larger scale across Oregon with the help of Senate Bill 530.**

By dividing up the monies into the four program areas: State Department of Agriculture, the State Forestry Department, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Senate Bill 530 helps capture Inflation Reduction Act (and other) dollars to allow Oregon to do the very necessary work of drawing down carbon in each of these four key areas.

We also believe strongly that these monies, through the State Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, should enhance the use of natural systems and landscapes **to capture and retain water in the soil**. This will be key to any successful carbon sequestration efforts. Whether for agricultural land, forest land, wildlife or watersheds, one of the biggest challenges we will face is being able to hold and utilize the water that falls on the state of Oregon. This becomes even more important as our snowpack (the biggest reservoirs we have!) continue to decline.

We are starting to experiment with Hügelkulturs, where woody debris is placed underground to be used as a sponge for water retention and to boost the beneficial microbial life in the soil. It helps capture the water that does fall on our land and increases the productivity of what we can grow for human and wildlife consumption.

Another key piece to holding and soaking water into the landscape is **BEAVERS**. More than any other benefit, Oregon—as the Beaver State—should do everything possible to bring back beavers across the whole state. It is the beaver, singlehandedly, that can build infrastructure that sustains and infiltrates water into the landscape enabling carbon sequestration, abundant vegetation growth, soil regeneration and ecosystems that allow wildlife and humans to thrive. We should be using the dollars that Senate Bill 530 would bring in to do a full court press to support beaver regeneration and growth in all areas of the state. This is a natural climate solution that will bring an incredible bang for our buck. And, how appropriate it would be to live up to our moniker: **Oregon, the Beaver State**.

Oregon has failed to meet our 2007 aspirational climate goals. Governor Brown’s executive order 20-04 has helped us get closer, but we are still far from where we need to be, with increasing impacts threatening livelihoods across the state. We know we can do more and Senate Bill 530 helps us achieve needed carbon sequestration across all Oregon working lands.

We would like to express our deepest thanks to the sponsors of this bill. Passing Senate Bill 530 would be a huge and needed shot-in-the-arm for those of us who live in this state to continue to do our part to sequester carbon, produce sustainable products and create measurable metrics to **EXPAND THESE PRACTICES** now and for the future.

We ask the Senate Committee on Natural Resources to move this bill out of committee with a “do pass” recommendation.

Thank you.