

Submitter: Mimi Casteel
On Behalf Of: Hope Well Wine
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB530

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, members of the Committee, for the record my name is Mimi Casteel from Hope Well in Polk County.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 530. I stand with a broad coalition of farmers and ranchers across Oregon who are asking for your passage of SB 530 this session.

Over 15 years in farming I've seen the benefits of managing for health and resilience. In the 2021 heat dome, our soil and crop temperatures were 20-30 degrees cooler than neighboring sites. We've had stable yields and longer growing seasons because of better soil water holding capacity, with no irrigation. But I also work with other ranchers, farmers and winegrowers on tracking soil health indicators, and identifying practices that optimize soil structure and function. What I've learned is what Oregon could do right now could make an unimaginable difference for future generations of Oregonians.

I've seen the results when land managers have the tools to understand their soils and how their practices can lead to not just better harvests, but less irrigation requirements, and lower costs of management because their crops don't need as many inputs.

We focus on Carbon, but more Carbon in the soil is always bound to other nutrients, as well as water. Water has an unparalleled thermal capacity. The additional 18-20,000 gallons of soil water per acre that we gain with each percent organic matter we grow becomes an agent of local cooling like no other. Every gram of water used in active plant transpiration uses 590 kCal of heat, representing a real and present potential for significant heat mitigation at the landscape scale. And that is just one of the potential benefits of supporting working lands towards a resilient and thriving future.

I strongly urge you to vote YES on SB 530, and thank you for your time.