

# HB 2998

# OREGON SOIL HEALTH INITIATIVE



Photo by NRCS Oregon

## Why a Healthy Soils Bill?

Oregon's farms and ranchers are increasingly impacted by extreme weather events including drought, fire, extreme heat and flooding, all while struggling with narrow profit margins.

Healthy soils provide many benefits for farms and ranches, including:

- economic resilience and increased profitability
- resilience to drought and other extreme weather events
- improved water and nutrient-holding capacity, reduced erosion, enhanced plant health (including disease and pest resistance)
- reduced agricultural input costs and protection of worker health
- sequestered carbon, improved water quality, and increased biodiversity and pollinator habitat

## What is the Oregon Soil Health Initiative?

The Healthy Soils Bill will establish 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. The Bill is a *voluntary, incentive-based approach* that is focused on expanding strategies to advance soil health including: technical assistance, equipment, farmer-to-farmer education, financial incentives, and research. The Institute for Natural Resources will coordinate the following collaborating entities: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon State University (Extension and College of Ag), Department of Agriculture, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

## Support HB 2998!

The Healthy Soils Bill has already garnered bi-partisan bicameral support in the Legislature. Establishing the Oregon Soil Health Initiative will coordinate new and existing efforts to support producers to maintain and improve soil health. HB 2998 will position Oregon to receive more federal funding by providing matching funds and creating a roadmap for the future of soil health.

# What soil health practices will the Initiative promote?

Whether growing fruit in Hood River or raising beef cattle in Eastern Oregon, there are soil health practices that fit every farm and ranch. The bill defines “soil health practice” as an agricultural practice consistent with the following soil health principles: keep the soil covered, maintain the presence of living roots, enhance biodiversity and limit disturbances. Soil health practices that align with these principles include:

- reduced tillage and no till
- cover cropping
- crop rotation
- rotational grazing
- mulching and application of compost
- integrated pest and nutrient management
- hedgerow and riparian plantings
- other agroforestry practices, such as silvopasture and alley cropping

## The Healthy Soils Bill is endorsed by *over 50 farms and ranches across the state and:*



Oregon Association of Conservation Districts



WILLAMETTE PARTNERSHIP



OREGON SOCIETY OF Soil Scientists

### For more information contact:

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