

Submitter: Patricia Dudley

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB2998

I am writing on behalf of Bethel Heights Vineyard in strong support of HB 2998, the Healthy Soils Bill, which would 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.

My family farms 82 acres of wine grapes in rural Polk County. Over the past decade we have gradually implemented regenerative farming practices in our mostly unirrigated vineyard, including the elimination of herbicides and introduction of perennial green cover throughout the vineyard. As a result we have seen increased amount and diversity of organic matter in our soils, improved moisture retention, and resilient vines less likely to shut down photosynthesis during periods of extreme heat and drought, especially at the end of the growing season. The results can be seen in the consistent high quality of the crop even in years of extreme duress.

We know many of our winegrower colleagues and other farmers in the Willamette Valley would eagerly implement these soil-building practices if they had access to technical assistance and equipment to transition to no-till and no-pesticide farming. The Soil Health Initiative will provide farmer to farmer education, equipment and financial incentives to farmers and ranchers who want to improve their soil health and are seeking support.

The Healthy Soils Bill will support, coordinate, and celebrate the work that many farmers and ranchers are doing to advance soil health. It will also position Oregon to receive federal funding to take this work even further.

Please support and do all you can to advance HB 2998.

Thank you for your consideration and your service.

Pat Dudley