

Submitter: Alana Monaco

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural  
Resources

Measure: HB5002

Dear Co-chairs Sen. Dembrow and Rep. Pham, and members of the committee:

I am writing today to express my gratitude for the inclusion of many of our priority programs in HB 5002 and the proposed Oregon Department of Agriculture Budget. As a {farmer/rancher/eater/community food system advocate} in {TOWN} it is really important to me that the state directly supports small and midsize farmers/ranchers, the ecosystems they depend on and the rural communities where they live.

Before speaking about specific programs and packages that are important to the folks we serve, I wanted to highlight something that was said in the informational hearings on this proposal over the last couple days. In response to Rep. Pham's questions a representative from the department reminded the committee that "ODA does not receive funding from the state that specifically supports local and regional food systems. Unlike international trade activities that are directly funded by federal dollars, the ODA market access program doesn't receive general funds to support developing, marketing or promoting resilient local food systems." This should be top of mind when deciding how to prioritize state funds. Oregon has a duty to use state funds to protect and elevate the resilient local food system. We are so lucky to have a long history and thriving community of small and midsize farmers; some of the most robust farmers markets, food hubs, and community supported agriculture networks in the country; and a high demand for local food across the board. Here are the programs represented in the budget that make the most difference to those producers.

I believe all packages should be funded. But, I especially support:

Package 350: The Soil Health Program

Soil is the basis for all agricultural activities and we should encourage every farmer in Oregon to grow with its health in mind.

The soil health specialist position funded in this package is essential to coordinating soil health efforts and helping draw more federal funds for soil health to Oregon.

This should be funded in conjunction with the Healthy Soils Initiative in HB2998.

Thank you.

Alana Monaco

Medford