

Submitter: Paulette Wittwer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate with the committee. You're faced with an enormous task to decide funding for so many important needs. These days even climate issues have raised more needs for services. To address this we have especially good legislation this session in bills like SB 530, Natural Climate Solutions and HB 2998, Healthy Soils and the several Building Resilience bills. As you well know, we have a unique opportunity, with federal funding from the Inflation Reduction Act, to do important work positioning our state, and especially rural Oregon, to address and reduce climate issues.

My family has a farm and forestland in the upper Hood River Valley. Along with others, we are experiencing the challenge of climate with extreme weather, dwindling water and other problems. We need to make changes to adapt and develop our farm and forest into an environmental asset, to lessen, not increase carbon, to avoid wildfire and to protect water. The proposed climate legislation provides opportunities to do these things, but first of all I urge you to FUND these important bills and then to adequately fund the agencies who provide staff and assistance to make them work. For example, the Oregon Department of Forestry is understaffed with climate-oriented staff; they need several new staff with a focus on climate to support the landmark legislation and make good change happen. Thank you. Through your efforts you are helping make Oregon a model for the country.