

Submitter: Megan Kemple  
On Behalf Of: Oregon Coalition to Advance Soil Health  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Committee:

I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Coalition to Advance Soil Health, made up of 27 organizations and over 80 farms and ranches from across the state, to urge you to fund the Healthy Soils Bill, HB 2998. The bill has bi-partisan, bi-cameral support from legislators including many of you.

The Healthy Soils Bill leverages federal funding and existing programs to 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 from trusted farm service providers--SWCDs and OSU  
Extension  
Equipment sharing  
Farmer-to-farmer education--because farmers learn best from others farmers  
Financial incentives, through the existing Oregon Agriculture Heritage Program

It does all of this with a small investment. More importantly, the Soil Health Initiative would leverage federal matching funds funding in multiple ways-- providing funding to farmers and ranchers and ranchers directly; to farm service providers; and also to the state.

Healthy soils can provide many benefits for farms and ranches, including:  
? resilience to drought and other extreme weather events  
? economic resilience  
? improved water and nutrient-holding capacity, reduced erosion, enhanced plant health  
? sequestered carbon, improved water quality, and increased biodiversity and pollinator habitat

Please fund the Healthy Soils Bill.

Megan Kemple,  
Oregon Coalition to Advance Soil Health