



Testimony in support of HB 5506

May 5, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and Members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Wong and I am the Board Chair of the Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC), based in Lyons, Oregon. The OOC was founded by organic trade leaders in 2004 and has brought together organic farmers, businesses, affiliated organizations, and other stakeholders, to provide direction and advocacy, and to support efforts that promote and grow organic trade and farming practices in Oregon.

I am writing to advocate for a strong, strategic climate-smart budget—especially at the intersection of food systems work. I urge budget writers to increase the budget to be able to maximize federal match opportunities.

Last session, the legislature declared organic an “Emerging Sector” and funded the recently released [Oregon Organic Market Assessment](#). One of the many recommendations in the *Assessment* is to continue to invest in **Organic Technical Assistance & Applied Research by expanding the successful Organic Extension Program at OSU**. Significant organic gains could be made in food-grade grain, dairy/livestock, fruit & tree fruit, soil ecology, vineyards, and hazelnuts. Supporting funding for the expansion of the Organic Extension Program is the OOC’s budget priority, because of the triple bottom line benefits organic agriculture can bring to the state.

Over the years, the OOC has seen organic growers’ need for support evolve and expand. US organic industry sales were valued at \$63.3 billion in 2021 but despite the continued growth of organic in Oregon, and various opportunities to accelerate that growth, Oregon is losing ground compared to other organic market-leading states across the country.

Pennsylvania invested nearly \$4 million specifically for organic programming. As a result, Pennsylvania’s organic growth from 2008 to 2021 went from \$212 million to \$1.1 billion in annual sales.

Likewise, Washington leveraged investments in organic to fuel annual organic sales from \$282 million to \$1.13 billion.

In contrast, during this same period Oregon's organic annual sales only grew from \$155 million to \$386 million. Investments in organic and organic practices are necessary to recapture the state's standing as an organic leader. Oregon is fortunate to have an established and successful Organic Extension Program, and now is the time to expand it.

The OOC also supports funding for:

- HB 2728 Double Up Food Bucks
- Funding for Farm to School Grant Programs
- HB 2907 Meat Processing Grant Fund
- SB 610 Food for All Oregonians
- OWEB POPS 215 and 115 for the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program
- SB 530 Natural Climate Solutions
- HB 2998 Healthy Soils
- HB 2124, notably Component 4-7 \$3 million for OCFSN Disaster and Drought Resilience and Component 4-8 OFMA and OCFSN Food Hub Funding

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Wong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Amy Wong

Board Chair