

February 6, 2024

Dear Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Hartman, and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage program and HB 4060. OAHP is the beginning of an investment in Oregon's community food systems and agricultural future. The conservation management plan and conservation easement portions of the program should be made available to as many farmers as possible.

After living and working on other people's farms in Benton county for more than 10 years, I was able to purchase my dream farm in Linn County two years ago. Part of our land ownership dream includes utilizing programs to help offset the exorbitant cost of our land through conservation easements and conservation management plans; we want to access state programs to assist us in protecting our land now, and in the future. The previous landowners made large-scale land management decisions and actions that we would like to change and improve in order to build a working farm that also protects the region's air, water and wildlife.

I have worked for years to build a business plan to build a small farm that provides the highest quality food and care for the land with the best ecologically-minded management strategies. I now have land that I can employ these strategies on. I have been supplying families in Linn, Benton, Lincoln and Multnomah Counties for 7 years, and part of what they are buying from us, in their dairy and beef, is conservation-focused farming strategies. I need as much assistance from the state as possible to protect the resources on these 81 acres, as I am using every resource I have to keep my small farm going, and to pay the mortgage.

Thank you to the committee members and chair who have prioritized this bill and the Oregon Ag Heritage Program. I urge you to support this vital program for the sake of Oregon's communities, land and agricultural future.

Sincerely,

Aimee Marciniak

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