

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nathan Woods, I'm a Steering Committee Member with Cultivate Oregon. I am writing in support of SB 887 to create an Organic Policy Specialist position at the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

In 2022, the legislature declared organic one of five "emerging sectors" in Oregon and appropriated funds for economic assessments of each sector. The assessment laid out several opportunities to build economic, agricultural, environmental, and community resilience through the organic sector. Oregon must continue to prioritize support for organic agriculture and there is a growing need for a policy specialist who understands the principles and practices of organic farming, production, and market creation.

Organic agriculture is critically important in helping to keep our watersheds free of toxic pesticides. Organic farms are important for water quality, human health, ecosystems, and carbon sequestration. It's time we move forward in the State of Oregon, away from outdated toxic pesticides and back to a way of farming that has been practiced for thousands of years.

Over 90% of Oregon households are buying Organic foods ([Organic Trade Association](#)). With a growing market demand for organic food we need professionals that can support the people's needs. This position would lead the facilitation, marketing, and trade of organic products, and ensure inner- & inter-agency integration of policies supporting organic practices.

As trade uncertainties and extreme weather events disrupt Oregon's food and agricultural systems, organic practices offer solutions that support agricultural and economic resilience and offer new market opportunities. Having an Organic Policy Specialist at ODA offers long-term support for an agricultural sector that offers many benefits to Oregon and its residents.

Ranking 12th in the nation, Oregon has 750 organic businesses and 30% of Oregon organic farms plan on increasing production over the next 5 years ([Organic Trade Association](#)). Now more than ever before we need Ag professionals that can support our growing organic businesses.

Thank you for supporting SB 887 to create an Organic Policy Specialist position at the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

Sincerely,

Nathan Woods
Cultivate Oregon Steering Committee Member