



AN EMPLOYEE OWNED PURPOSE TRUST

March 4, 2025

The Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

Attn: Chair Senator Golden, Vice-Chair Senator Nash and members of the Committee

Oregon State Capitol

Salem, OR.

RE: Testimony in Support of funding SB 887-1 Organic Policy Specialist at the Oregon Department of Agriculture

Dear Chair Senator Golden, Vice-Chair Senator Nash and members of the Committee,

My name is Stacy Kraker, CEO at Hummingbird Wholesale. I am writing in support of SB 887 as it presents a clear opportunity to grow Oregon's agricultural industry by creating an Organic Policy Specialist position at the Oregon Department of Agriculture. This position would lead the facilitation, marketing, and trade of organic products, and coordinate the integration of policies supporting organic practices across the ODA and with other agencies.

At Hummingbird Wholesale, we are committed to supporting Oregon's organic sector. We collaborate with Oregon organic farmers, working with them to source ingredients as a manufacturer and distributor of organic food. We have this commitment because we believe organic production is a triple bottom line win for our future – organic agriculture strengthens our regional economy, particularly in rural communities, reduces many harmful environmental impacts of agricultural systems and has a positive impact on human health. Investments in organic farming education, advocacy and essential programs are vital for fostering continued growth in our agricultural industry.

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. Ranking 12th in the nation for organic sales, Oregon is ideally situated to be a leader in the rapidly growing organic industry, which surpassed \$63 billion in 2023. We will need to make both public and private investments in order to fully actualize this opportunity, as Oregon is losing ground compared to other organic market-leading states across the country that have allocated significant investments such as Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin. With this bill, we can prioritize support for organic agriculture and more fully leverage the opportunities it represents by having someone who understands the principles and practices of organic farming, production, and market creation working within the ODA.

The proposal for establishing an Organic Policy Special Assistant at ODA is modeled on a successful program for encouraging the development of organic systems that was instituted at the federal level by the USDA. Having a similar position at ODA would provide Oregon producers with greater access to resources for their success. There are two main goals addressed by the proposal for this new position within the ODA: 1) Coordinating department policies that impact organic production and marketing and 2) integrating organic policy throughout the range of inner- and inter- agency activities. This dual focus is necessary because Oregon's organic agriculture covers a broad scope, encompassing a wide variety of organic products—from produce, to grains, to livestock products—and Oregon's organic trade also includes many organic handling and processing operations. Creating a position with a designated focus on



AN EMPLOYEE OWNED PURPOSE TRUST

ensuring cohesive, integrated policies for organic production and handling not only encourages the expansion and development of the organic trade, it also makes excellent use of ODA's resources through:

- Encouraging increased communication about, and understanding of, the needs of the organic trade throughout ODA;
- Fostering analysis of policy gaps needed to eliminate hurdles to further development of Oregon's organic trade;
- Eliminating duplicative regulatory efforts;
- Streamlining programs to promote and market Oregon's organic products;
- Creating a focal point for ODA's interactions with other state agencies interested in organic issues such as those with programs for economic development and environmental improvement; and
- Fostering opportunities for encouraging use of ecological farming practices throughout Oregon's agricultural community.

The estimated fiscal impact of SB 887-1 is small compared to the inevitable return on investment. We believe now is the time for this investment to support Oregon's organic agricultural sector in order to advance Oregon toward economic and climate change adaptation. ***We strongly support SB 887-1 as a strategic investment that will increase support for organic and transitioning farmers, improve access to organic food and make way for greater economic growth in Oregon.***

Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Stacy Kraker, CEO, Hummingbird Wholesale