

Submitter:	Athena Petty
On Behalf Of:	New Seasons Market
Committee:	Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	SB887

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

My name is Athena Petty and I lead sustainability for New Seasons Market and our 22 locations in the Portland metro area. 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.

This position would lead the facilitation, marketing, and trade of organic products, and ensure inner- & inter-agency integration of policies supporting organic practices.

New Seasons Market employs 2,700 staff, and provides food to hundreds of thousands of Oregonians looking for organic and locally sourced food for their families. Insights tell us that, when looking for produce and meats, our customers shop with us so they can support the growers using organic practices, which they know will provide more nutrition for their family, pay farmers a fair wage and support soil health practices better suited for farming in a warming climate.

The addition of an Organic Policy Specialist at the ODA just makes sense for Oregon, where we have such a large market opportunity in this rapidly growing organic industry, to invest in our soils and the farmers who tend do the land.

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

Sincerely,

Athena Petty

Sr Manager of Sustainability
New Seasons Market