



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

[Center for Food Safety](#) supports 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.

The Center for Food Safety has long worked to maintain and enhance strong organic standards that live up to the quality and integrity that consumers expect from organic products including foods, clothing, personal care products such as cosmetics, and pet foods through legal actions, policy comments, and public education. We strive to evolve the organic ethic by promoting agriculture that is local, small, medium and family-scale, biologically diverse, humane and socially just. The ultimate goal of our campaign is to move beyond the industrial agriculture model to a new vision and practice of organic farming that supports and sustains the natural world for future generations.

An Organic Policy Specialist would help our organic farmer members in Oregon, as well as emerging farmers who strive to grow food organically. Our thousands of members in Oregon who care about buying organic food will also benefit from additional support for organic agriculture in Oregon, as these members also seek to buy food grown or produced locally. Indeed, over 90% of Oregon households are buying organic foods, and has 750 organic businesses, with 30% of Oregon organic farms planning to increase production over the next 5 years.¹

Center for Food Safety has also engaged in litigation in federal court to protect the integrity of the organic standards, including when the last Trump administration attempted to withdraw rules for the living standards of animals raised organically. *Center for Environmental Health v. Perdue*, No. 18-1763 (N.D. Cal 2018). As we may be facing threats again to the national organic program and USDA staff, it will be extra important for Oregon to support its organic farmers locally.

Further, 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.

¹ Organic Trade Association.



CENTER FOR
FOOD SAFETY

As such, I urge you to pass SB 887 to support organic agriculture in Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy van Saun".

Amy van Saun
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Center for Food Safety
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