



Chair Helm, Vice-Chair McDonald, members of the committee...

My name is Hugh Ady. I'm with Statecraft, a government relations firm representing Defend Workers, a nonpartisan organization. The purpose of Defend Workers is to advocate for laws and policies that improve the standard of living for Oregon's workers. In that vein, we view House Bill 2730 as a significant step forward in strengthening Oregon's agricultural sector, stabilizing its food supply, and generating more job opportunities for Oregonians.

While most farmer development programs are focused on providing loan assistance, land acquisition, resource suggestions, and other benefits, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher program in House Bill 2730 is strictly education oriented. Oregon has 17 community colleges, and many of them offer agricultural training or certification that would qualify for the benefits of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher program in House Bill 2730. Some of these community colleges are:

1. Blue Mountain Community College, which has an Agricultural Production Livestock associate's degree
2. Central Oregon Community College, Chemeketa Community College, and Klamath Community College, Mount Hood Community Colleges all offer Agricultural Sciences Associates
3. Linn Benton Community College offers an Agricultural Sciences and Management associates
4. Treasure Valley Community College offers an associates in general agriculture and
5. Umpqua Community College provides an associates in Agricultural Business Management

As you can see, there are an array of higher education institutions providing agricultural education that function as a direct pipeline into the actual business of owning and operating a farm or ranch. While these programs are in certain parts of the state, the benefits are felt statewide. It's been said many times: farmers feed Oregon, and we need more of them. One of the other members of this panel is a graduate of Oregon State University, which has acclaimed agricultural programs such as the Center for Small Farms and Community Systems. Students who aspire to become farmers or ranchers, and who are enrolled in the programs at these community colleges and universities that I've mentioned, would be eligible for the loan repayment subsidies, stipends, and scholarships provided by the proposed Beginning Farmer and Rancher program.

It is in the best interest of the state to provides incentives for men and women to become farmers and ranchers. Thank you for your attention to this important legislation, and I'm happy to answer any questions this committee might have regarding House Bill 2730.