

Submitter: ANDREW HALL

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB429

Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 429. While I appreciate its aim to regulate agricultural cooperative boards, I oppose it due to its significant budgetary and legal risks, which could burden Oregon's finances.

First, enforcing SB 429 will cost money the state may not have. The bill's new rules for cooperative boards will require oversight, likely by an agency like the Oregon Department of Agriculture. This means hiring staff or shifting resources to monitor compliance and enforce violations. With many counties facing budget shortfalls after pandemic funds dried up, adding these costs without clear funding could cut into vital services like public safety. Where will this money come from, and what will we sacrifice to pay for it?

Second, SB 429 invites costly litigation. Its mandates could be seen as overreach into private governance, prompting lawsuits from cooperatives or individuals. Even if the state wins, legal fees and staff time will add up fast. If courts strike down vague provisions, Oregon might face further expenses to fix the law. These risks could drain funds needed elsewhere, especially now, when fiscal stability is shaky.

Agricultural cooperatives are key to Oregon's rural economy, and I support good governance. But SB 429's financial downsides—unfunded enforcement and litigation exposure—could hurt more than help.

In short, Oregon can't afford new costs without a funding plan. SB 429's enforcement and legal vulnerabilities threaten our budget. I urge you to reject it or amend it with a clear cost strategy. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hall

Salem, Oregon