

To: The Senate Committee on Education
attn: Chair Senator Michael Dembrow, Vice-Chair Senator Chuck Thomsen and Members of the Committee

My name is Peter Bungum, and I am writing in support of SB 404-2. I have been a conventional farm worker, a plant pathology researcher, and an organic industry professional at the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI). After seeing the differences between these two systems, I emphatically support organic agriculture both ideologically, and financially with my purchases. As a lifelong Oregon resident that believes that our natural resources are fragile, I especially value the consideration that organic farmers and organic certifiers and regulators give for soil, water, nearby ecosystems, and animal welfare.

I support SB 404 because it establishes resources for organic farmers. Farming in general is a difficult and complex endeavor. Organic farming can add additional layers onto an already complicated business. Expanding university extension and ODA services to assist organic farmers could help boost their productivity, improve their chances of success, and improve Oregonians' access to organic products. Additionally, the jobs that this funding would support appear to be both worthwhile and rewarding. Furthermore, I encourage the state to seek ways to encourage a diverse applicant pool.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Peter O. Bungum
Senior Technical Coordinator, OMRI