



**TESTIMONY
Oregon Farm Bureau**

LC 4094/SB 956

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

April 8, 2015

Chair Edwards and Members of the Committee:

Oregon Farm Bureau urges you to support LC 4094 (now SB 956). LC 4094 requires conditional land use approval for the construction of wetlands, giving farmers in Oregon an opportunity to participate in the planning process, and raise any concerns they have over potential impacts from the project.

By way of background, the Oregon Farm Bureau is a voluntary, grassroots, nonprofit agricultural organization representing Oregon's farmers and ranchers in the public and policymaking arena. As Oregon's largest general farm organization, its primary goal is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for its members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole. Today, Oregon Farm Bureau represents over 7,000 member families professionally engaged in the industry and has a total membership of over 60,000 families.

Under current law, the construction of a wetland is permitted outright in an exclusive farm use zone. LC 4094 seeks to make construction of a wetland a conditional use, which would require a person seeking to construct a wetland to go through the local land use process. This permit process gives neighboring landowners a forum to provide evidence on impacts to their farming operations from the project, and requires the local governing body to make a finding that the project will not significantly increase the cost of farming practices or force a significant change in farming practices in the area impacted by the project.

Requiring wetlands to go through the conditional use process will result in better project design that minimizes the potential impacts to neighbor, and provides a forum for neighbors to express concerns about the potential impacts to their operations from the wetland. Requiring wetlands to go through the conditional use process will help minimize the impacts from wetlands on neighboring agricultural operations, and help ensure that farmers in Tillamook County can continue to productively farm in Tillamook County.

Please contact Mary Anne Nash with the Oregon Farm Bureau with any questions.