



May 21, 2015

Rep. Shemia Fagan, Chair  
House Committee on Consumer Protection &  
Government Effectiveness Committee  
900 Court St., NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 341A

Chair Fagan & Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Tourism Development Council for Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory (OMHT), the destination marketing organization for Clackamas County, I ask for your support of SB 341A.

Along with increasing demand for locally grown produce, and the growing popularity of farm shares, farmers' markets and farm-to-table diners, more and more people are wanting to know where their food comes from, to see how it is grown and to meet the people who produce it. OMHT recognized early on the potential that agri-tourism had for bringing visitors into our rural communities. It is for this reason that agri-tourism is one of the three pillars on which our Tourism Master Plan is based; recreation and heritage being the other two.

To deliver this programing, we partner with local farmers and ranchers to develop and promote authentic, meaningful and memorable agri-tourism experiences. Increasing visitors and participation in agri-tourism/agri-culinary activities indicates there is significant interest in these kinds of experiences.

There is however a down side to greater numbers of people coming onto Oregon farms and ranches. The providers are being exposed to greater liability risk; many of whom are not necessarily making a great deal of money off the activities they are providing. Rather, they are supplementing farm incomes while offering experiences people want.

Incidents and accidents can occur for any number of reasons. Many of which are beyond the control of the provider. These are the "inherent risks" of simply walking on to a working farm or ranch. We feel that a base level of protection should be extended to agri-tourism providers against this category of risks.

As a destination marketing organization, we balance the interests of our tourism partners as well as those of the visitors who come to explore and play in Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory. We believe SB 341A provides a balanced approach to delineating risk and responsibilities associated with agritourism activities.

We hope you agree and urge your support.

Sincerely,

Jim Austin  
Legislative Affairs Coordinator  
Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory