



February 23, 2016

Chair Brad Witt
House Interim Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 1517 - Wetlands

Dear Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association ("OCA") is the voice of the cattle industry in Oregon. We represent over 1800 ranchers in Oregon and aim to help grow Oregon's beef industry and promote environmentally and socially sound economic practices. Oregon has over 13,000 cattle producers, using 57% of state agricultural lands and comprising 14% of Oregon's total agricultural sector. In addition to my role with OCA, I am also a dairy farmer and member of the Oregon Dairy Farmer's Association.

I am here to support SB 1517 and the dash A6 amendments. SB 1517 recognizes a current gap in Oregon public policy, and our approach to constructing wetlands that are adjacent to our state's farms, ranches and dairies. Unfortunately, too often the construction of these wetlands occurs without regard to the impact on agricultural operations. This causes particular challenges to farmers in the wettest parts of Oregon, places where farmers struggle to maintain adequate drainage for significant portions of the year.

OCA supports SB 1517 and its attempt to implement a collaborative approach to wetlands in Tillamook County. This bill will allow farmers to work directly with Tillamook County in a comprehensive planning process to prioritize wetlands restoration while protecting agricultural operations. This pilot project is good public policy and recognizes a need that is not currently met under Oregon law.

We thank the committee, the Oregon Farm Bureau and other stakeholders for their work on this bill. I hope you will support SB 1517 and the dash A6 amendments.

Thank you.

Jerome Rosa
Executive Director