



**Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Request Your SUPPORT of SB 1517B**

The Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Dairy Farmers Association request your support for SB 1517B, which creates a pilot program that authorizes Tillamook County to create a collaborative process to facilitate local input and involvement in wetlands restoration projects that are sited in the County.

Due to very wet conditions most of the year, the ability to maintain adequate drainage on their farm fields is critical to Tillamook County farmers. In recent years, there has been an increase in the construction of wetlands in some agricultural areas in Tillamook County. In some cases, these wetlands alter the drainage patterns in the area around the project and can create unacceptable flooding issues on neighboring farms. Given that farmers in wetland areas already struggle to combat flooding in wet years, these projects can drastically decrease the productivity of impacted farms. The dairy industry forms the backbone of the economy in Tillamook County, and it is essential that these operations continue to be able to coexist with local conservation projects while maintaining the functioning agricultural land base they need to be successful. Through this bill, the County and the local agricultural community seek to have greater local input into the design of these projects to ensure that they do not have impacts on productive agricultural land while continuing to provide valuable fisheries and wildlife improvements desired in the county.

SB 1517B contains three primary provisions: 1) it gives Tillamook County the option for local approval of wetlands projects sited in exclusive farm use zones to ensure that the project will not impact nearby agricultural operations; 2) it allows Tillamook County to create a collaborative process that a project applicant can choose to use to achieve agreement regarding conditions necessary to protect neighboring agricultural operations; and 3) it directs Tillamook County to enter into a planning process involving a diverse group of stakeholders that will allow the County to more effectively plan priority areas for restoration and priority areas where the maintenance of agricultural operations will be protected. The pilot project sunsets in 10 years.

Oregon Farm Bureau urges the legislature to support this legislation, and enable Tillamook County to continue its long history of collaborative conservation.

**SUPPORT the Tillamook County Dairy Farmers by
VOTING "YES" SB 1517B**

For more information contact: Mary Anne Nash or Tammy Dennee