

Richard Fiala

Fiala Farms, an Oregon Century Farm

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Representative Brian Clem, Chair

House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

900 Court St. NE, H-478

Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3249, Oregon Agriculture Heritage Program

Chair Clem and Members, House agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

I ask you to support HB3249.

I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on HB 3249. My family first came to Oregon in 1848 settling in the Pumpkin Ridge area of Washington County. My Fathers parents purchased 56 acres along the Tualatin River in 1906, where their descendants still operate a “family farm”. We are the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> generations to live and work this land. I speak to you as a farmer, a son and grandson of a farmer. It has been obvious to our family that succession planning is a requirement for the future of young farmers in Oregon and with the guidance from OSU and HB3249 more families will smoothly transition from one generation to another.

HB3249 presents to Oregonians an opportunity to preserve farm land in perpetuity. The effect of saving producing farm land near our metropolitan areas is not a novel idea. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

their program has been buying development rights and saving farmland since 1983. As of September 22, 2015, the Agricultural Preserve Board has preserved 77,148 acres of farmland on 909 Lancaster County family farms. Here in the North West, Skagit County, Washington has successfully been saving farmland since 1998. The Conservation Futures Program purchased development rights and placed easements on over 500 acres in its first full year of operation (1999). At the end of 2016 over 10,000 acres have protective easements in effect. This program will also allow a new generation to begin farming, (lower property prices) something an aging farming community really needs. Oregon has been a leader in many innovative ideas from open beaches, progressive land use laws and our barrier breaking bottle bill. While we are behind other states in the preservation of farm land we have an opportunity with HB 3249 to begin a program that will once again elevate Oregon to a leadership position in conservation.

While you will receive many other testimonies on HB3249, I speak to you as farmer and land owner who would be interested in saving our property in perpetuity for the next several generations of Fiala's. I ask you to support HB 3249.

Thank you,  
Richard Fiala