



# *Malheur County*

## **ONION GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

*"The Home of Mild Sweet Spanish Onions"*

710 S. W. 5th Avenue . . . Ontario, Oregon 97914

Phone (541) 881-1417

February 15, 2019

The Honorable Brian Clem  
Chair, House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use  
900 Court St. NE, H-478  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
[Rep.BrianClem@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Rep.BrianClem@oregonlegislature.gov)

Dear Chairman Clem,

The Malheur County Onion Growers Association fully supports HB 2451, which would remove the mandatory inspection of onions by the state of Oregon. The Malheur Onion Growers Association represents all of the onion growers in Malheur County, Oregon, which is the nation's leading onion producing county. Our member growers are extremely committed to producing safe and healthful crops with the highest quality standards.

Our growers as well as our colleagues in southwestern Idaho have been operating under a United States Department of Agriculture Marketing Order (no. 958) since 1957. The marketing order has well-established regulations regarding the grade, size, maturity, and quality for onions that are shipped from Malheur County and neighboring counties in Idaho. These standards ensure that we only ship the highest quality of onions to consumers.

Should the standards for the Marketing Order change, the current Oregon inspection law would put our growers at a disadvantage to our competitors in Idaho and Washington. Neither of those states, or any other state we are aware of, have mandatory state inspections for marketing onions.

We wish to emphasize that the Oregon inspection law does not affect food safety. Our growers adhere to the food safety standards and regulations established by the US Food & Drug Administration, US Environmental Protection Agency and the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

We appreciate Representatives Lynn Findley and Mike Nearman for sponsoring HB2451, and we look forward to your committee's support of it.

Sincerely,

Paul Skeen  
President, Malheur County Onion Growers Association