

Dear Committee Members;

My name is Linda Bentz I am a widowed 6th generational rancher living and working in Juntura, Oregon. I am a mother of five children all who are involved in the ranching operation. I serve on several boards one of which is the Oregon Beef Council, Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalitions, the Juntura Weed Board, Juntura Rangeland Fire District and retired Juntura School Board Chairman.

At this time, I would like to take my hats off as a board member of the various organizations and write to you as a concerned citizen of Oregon.

I am concerned with the bill HB 2020 that if enacted, could cause great hardships on those living in Oregon, on the East side and in boarder communities.

- 1.) Making the cost of doing business in Oregon will have the most detrimental effects in boarder communities. These cities and towns bordering Idaho, Washington, Nevada and California will see an exodus of business that are able to relocate. For those of us in the agricultural industry that are tied to the land economically and emotionally – having been here for generations – face a tremendous challenge leaving Oregon. Yet we still must compete on price with neighboring states despite higher input costs.
- 2.) Recreation and tourism play an important role in Oregon’s economy. Increased gas prices only go to discourage this and impede the enjoyment of the beautiful outdoors of Oregon.
- 3.) In light of our schools, especially rural school, we already suffer from lowered budgets and this bill will only force them into higher operational costs. Rural bus routes can be much longer, covering many miles to and from schools. Who will lose out? Our children and our grandchildren - instead of spending money on better education it will go to operational cost.
- 4.) Rangeland Fire Protection Agencies and the Bureau of Land Management are all critical in fighting Oregon’s wildfires. The past years have shown that this problem isn’t going away any time soon. Increased costs will put the burden on our State, county and citizens of Oregon.
- 5.) Our protection agencies of State Police and local County Sheriff departments will have higher costs in which the services all depend on driving our roads and making sure our citizens are safe.
- 6.) Emergency medical ambulance and search and rescue services will suffer.
- 7.) Oregon is dependent on trucking services to haul commodities such as our foods and goods across the state and into other states. Everyone that buys food from the grocery store or clothes from a clothing store will have higher cost to pay due to this tax. Every year higher cost will be forced upon those products that we love to eat, the activities we love to do and the goods we depend on for our livelihood.
- 8.) Lastly, I would like to speak for the many ranchers and farmers that produce our locally grown food. Already, farmers and ranchers struggle with uncertainty of prices and weather in bringing Oregonians products from the field to the plate. Much of the agricultural industry faces high input costs for labor, equipment, environmental regulations and every day cost to bring us healthy food. When Oregon ranchers and farmers can no longer compete with neighboring states, access to locally grown foods is

diminished. Aren't locally grown foods at the heart of Oregon and what we should be incentivizing, not discouraging? An unintended consequence of this policy could incentives longer hauling of commodities and products from other states, resulting in increased carbon emissions, going against the very essence of this carbon reduction bill. It will make it much more challenging for families to pass on their livelihood onto the next generation. Every day we are losing the next generation as they are moving to urban areas for higher-paying jobs.

I strongly encourage the Committee to reconsider this bill. Who will really affect? It will affect our children, grandchildren and next generation. It will damage our ability to independently provide the education, emergency services, goods and foods that every Oregonian depends on.

Sincerely,

Linda Bentz