



# Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau

87518 Davis Creek Lane, Bandon, Oregon 97411

March 6, 2019

**TO: The Oregon Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction  
Co-Chair Senator Michael Dembrow  
Co-Chair Representative Kerin Power**

**RE: Coos-Curry Farm Bureau Comments on HB 2020**

Dear Joint Committee Co-Chairs Dembrow and Power:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation. The Coos-Curry Farm Bureau sincerely believes this legislation, if passed, will result in long-term deleterious impacts to the currently struggling farm businesses in the southwest part of the state. As you are aware, the Oregon Farm Bureau adamantly opposes this bill. This comment letter is not intended to repeat the numerous objections and concerns already presented by the Oregon Farm Bureau. Its purpose is to highlight the difficulties it will impose on the remaining agricultural enterprises in Coos and Curry Counties.

Over the past twenty (20) years agriculture decreased in southwest Oregon. Our diverse industry with numerous commodities for sale and robust production facilities are depleting. With the globalization of agricultural products, small family farmers in southwest Oregon have been caught not being able to cost effectively transport their products to market. Numerous family owned and operated cranberry, Easter lily, dairy, sheep, fish and cattle ranches have been sold. Many have been turned into large acreage estates for the wealthy migrating from California. Several are now home to 18-hole première golf courses and destination resorts. The inability to afford existing production and transportation costs amid the formidable price fluctuations of global commodity markets has decimated the local agricultural economy.

Agriculture is trade dependent more so than most other industries. The Internet can't get a chicken or beef cow to Portland. Nor can it get a much sought after wasabi rhizome to New York or Japan. Our businesses depend on moving commodities world-wide from the far reaches of southwest Oregon on a transportation system that is unreliable at best. Agriculture producers pay a premium for every item shipped because we are not within a major transportation corridor or hub. Shipping animals requires special trucks that can control animal stress, movement, and weight while maintaining a healthy travel experience. These trucks are expensive and consume large amounts of diesel fuel. Shipping fresh produce or meats from southwest Oregon requires extra packaging and specialized cooling over and above that normally required for produce from areas such as the Willamette Valley.

Several highways coming in to and out of southwest Oregon are weight restricted. This limits the size of trucks that are able to service our area. Further, some of the main travel routes are actually blocked due to road failures and landslides during inclement weather events that are frequent during the winter and early spring. Hwy 101 is currently blocked to large trucks going in to and out of southern Oregon. Local grocery stores have near empty shelves and gas stations have been running out of fuel. Fuel trucks that make it into the area require pilot cars due to the treacherous road conditions. These are unfortunately "normal" conditions in the pursuit of farming in southwest Oregon. Continued agriculture production all comes down to the price of fuel, which is dictated, by logistics, distance and time. In southwest Oregon we pay a premium for all three.

HB 2020 proposes to increase the cost of gas and diesel fuel for farmers. In southwest Oregon we already pay a premium fuel bill to survive and stay competitive. We have no doubt that the horrendous increases in fuel costs proposed in the bill will result in more family farms being sold for non-farm uses. The landscape will further be transformed towards recreation resorts, golf courses and estates for the wealthy. These entities do not provide living wage jobs for working families. Nor will they provide good opportunities for carbon sequestration. HB 2020 will change southwest Oregon. No longer will people travel amid lily fields, cranberry bogs and open cattle pastures. The landscape will become a mix of recreation resorts, retirement villages and gated hilltop houses surrounded by communities of low-income housing, fewer living wage jobs and higher priced food. This is certainly more deleterious than trying to achieve a carbon reduction goal that is so small that it can't be measured.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our opinion on this most important issue to the ranching and farming community in southwestern Oregon.

Sincerely,



Ryan McCarthy, President  
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CC: Representative David Brock Smith  
Senator Dallas Heard  
Representative Caddy McKeown  
Senator Arnie Roblan