



Oregon Association of  
Conservation Districts

April 8, 2019

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use

[haglu.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:haglu.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

From: The Oregon Association of Conservation Districts

Re: Strong Support for HB 3085, Supporting Oregon's Family Farmers

To Chair Clem, Vice Chairs McLain and Post, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 3085. I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts to express strong support for HB 3085, which establishes the Family Farmer Loan Program. OACD serves and represents Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which are special districts governed by elected boards. The Districts protect and enhance soil quality, water quality and quantity, and habitat by supporting voluntary conservation in partnership with private landowners and managers as well as nonprofit, federal, and state partners like the Oregon Department of Agriculture. **HB 3085 would maintain and strengthen Oregon's distinctive family-farm-based economy, enhancing its diversity, resilience, and longevity to best meet current and future food production needs.**

Agriculture is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest economic driver in the state (\$8.2 billion annually), but the future of this crucial economic base faces significant challenges. Oregon's agricultural lands are shrinking and becoming more expensive. Since 1974, half a million acres of land has been taken out of production, and 65,600 acres have been taken out of Exclusive Farm Use zoning. The cost per acre of farmland increased from \$1,534 in 2002 to \$1,882 in 2012. These pressures, in addition to the many pressures of a globalized market, are major challenges to the family farmers who are stewards of our natural resources and food system. **Family farmers are essential to the local food and fiber production, diverse economic base, and responsible natural resource use and management that makes Oregon the healthy, resilient home that it is.** HB 3085 would strengthen this foundation of our state, and make access to family farming more equitable by providing loans to residents with a net worth below \$1.5 million, or below \$750,000 for beginning farmers or ranchers.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB 3085 and the importance of supporting family farmers and ranchers. **We encourage you to pass HB 3085 to support the families and beginning farmers and ranchers who are stewards of our natural resources and economy.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Freitas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anna" and last name "Freitas" clearly distinguishable.

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