



TO: House Economic Development Committee  
FROM: Anna Symonds, East Fork Cultivars  
DATE: February 10, 2020  
RE: Testimony in support of HB 4156

Chairman Lively, Members of the Committee:

My name is Anna Symonds and I am the Director of Education for East Fork Cultivars, testifying in support of HB 4156.

East Fork Cultivars is a family farm and plant breeding innovator in southwest Oregon, located in the small town of Takilma, in Rep. Wilson's District. We employ 24 people with year-round, full-time, living-wage jobs. We offer health insurance, paid time off, and our starting wage is \$20/hour.

Our mission is to produce safe and effective plant-based medicine through regenerative, sustainable agriculture. Those guiding principles are why we were one of the first farms in the nation to attain USDA Organic Certification for our hemp crops, as well as Sun + Earth Certification for both our cannabis and hemp. It's deeply important to us to continue to lead on sustainability issues.

While these are currently the most rigorous independent certifications available for these crops, they don't specifically address energy and water performance in cultivation. The standards that the Resource Innovation Institute has developed for this bill, House Bill 4156, would set a crucial data-supported foundation for our industry that could then be used for those and other types of certification systems.

HB 4156 advances the economic development interests of Oregon by creating a voluntary certification system recognizing the most resource-efficient cannabis and hemp farms. The bill supports energy and water benchmarking, and the establishment of usage baselines and performance standards. We believe that it makes sense in every way, including economic sense, to recognize and thus incentivize thrifty and efficient use of public resources.

This bill is important to our family farm and to Oregon's hemp and cannabis trades as a whole. Combined, these agricultural sectors are now a multi-billion dollar industry and still growing -- and Oregon is at the center of the national hemp renaissance. House Bill 4156 is about preparing Oregon cannabis and hemp to lead on the national and global stages via an objective certification system that will recognize resource-efficient best practices.

Our state has a unique opportunity at this moment to position itself as the lowest-cost, highest-quality exporter of cannabis and hemp products as export opportunities open up. Differentiation will be increasingly as the market unfolds, and certifications help farms stand out with consumers. Through a small investment funded with existing resources, HB4156 puts

Oregon's cannabis and hemp farms in the driver's seat as a global standard on energy and water best practices is designed and piloted.

This bill has bi-partisan, bi-cameral support, requires no general fund money, and no OLCC tax fund recipients (e.g. schools, law enforcement) would be affected. As farmers ourselves, we would be happy to pay a potential small increase in OLCC licensing fees to fund this important program, and such a cost would be more than offset by savings from increases in efficiency.

I urge you to support and pass HB4156. Thank you for your time today and your continued service to Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Anna Symonds  
Director of Education, East Fork Cultivars