

Co-chairs Sen. Dembrow and Sen Olsen and Members of the Committee,

My name is Paulette Wittwer. I am here to talk from the perspective of a farm and small forest owner and to let you know that my husband and I support SB 1530. I also commend those legislators who have worked so hard on this. Whatever we can do to lower our Green House Gas emissions is so important.

Our farm, in the upper Hood River Valley, is already experiencing impacts from climate change. Our 48 acre forest is dry and vulnerable to fire and disease. We've had to cut and replant a different tree species on several acres of trees infested with beetles. We watch the disappearing glaciers on Mt. Hood and the undependable snow pack. Our irrigation costs have tripled in the last few years and the price is going up again this year.

And we know this is just the beginning. We would like to keep our family farm and woodland and pass it on to our children and our 5 grandchildren. But what does the future hold, not only for farms and forests but for our grandchildren, and for everyone's grandchildren? We feel we must do everything in our power to change the catastrophic future that is moving quickly upon us.

I understand the difficulty of change and the fears associated with it especially in the timber and farm communities. Small farms are struggling and small woodlands are disappearing. Loggers, log truckers & mill workers are a threatened species. I come from a family where two of my uncles were loggers and another a logging engineer in Douglas Co. Our family loggers needed those jobs and put up with hard work and little safety. During the depression my father logged too, but he saved what he could (\$25) and went to Oregon State to become an Ag teacher -which he loved. New jobs are one of the promises of this bill; there will be opportunity to do job training and help with changes if necessary. 10% of the climate Investment fund is set aside for this purpose--an estimated \$10 million. This is one of the reasons we support this bill.

Another part of the bill that we like is that it allows for forest carbon offsets. I hope it will allow small woodland owners, as well as large, to choose offsets and sequester carbon. Right now Oregon loses 1.1% of private forestland every year to other uses. Surprisingly, 43% of private forest land is small woodlands and ¾ of those are only 1 to 49 acres. That's not always sustainable. Adding the offset option might be one way for family forests to stay in families and also contribute to a healthier future.

Another benefit for forests in 1530 is financial support for wildfire mitigation, now the responsibility of private owners. There's also support for other projects to encourage healthy forests. A spin-off from these projects will be more forest-related jobs.

For farmers like us, with increasing water problems, there will be the opportunity to convert to more efficient irrigation. This may mean the difference between affording to irrigate or not.

On our farm we decided to invest in solar energy more than a decade ago. It was expensive but we were able to get a small grant and a tax rebate. With that help, it paid for itself in seven years and now 2/3's of our energy comes from that solar panel. We're sold on it and happy that the bill includes incentives for installing solar that will benefit rural areas both in costs and jobs.

I have heard a lot of testimony from rural residents who fear that a cap and invest bill will

affect the cost of gas and their ability to work or travel. They may not know that the bill has also changed since last year to exempt regulation of transportation fuels in many rural parts of the state and has created refunds for fuel costs that are a result of off-road farm or forest uses.

Last year, listening to discussions on HB 2020 I heard both sides saying “they don’t understand.” I hope we find common ground this year, in this bill that has changed to be more understanding of rural Oregon. Oregon agriculture and forestland can and should be part of the solution.