

March 30, 2021



Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court Street NE
Room 453
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Wagner and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

I am writing today in support of the appointment of Dr. Ashley Thompson to the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

As an orchardist in Hood River County, my first introduction to Dr. Thompson was through her professional role as Oregon State University Extension Specialist in Horticulture. Her sincere care for the land and the hundreds of farmers she works with in Hood River and Wasco counties earned her the respect, trust, and gratitude of many throughout our valley. Dr. Thompson actively engages with farmers to aid them in developing efficient and sustainable farming practices to promote quality fruit production while taking great care to preserve and protect our farmlands for the generations who will care for it in the years to come.

Dr. Thompson plays a critical role in connecting farmers with resources and tools to achieve environmentally respectful and sustainable farming practices. The farmland in the Columbia River Gorge is unique in that most land has been farmed by multiple generations of the same family. Today's farmers are tasked with preserving and protecting the land for the next generation to come, and Dr. Thompson is our connection to the most current research and best practices for a sustainable future.

In addition to her focus on preserving and protecting the land, Dr. Thompson saw a need in her community to help farmworkers during the COVID-19 crisis. Of her own volition, she developed resources and materials aimed at protecting a vulnerable sector of our community during the pandemic. She created and fostered participation in educational opportunities to guide farmers through the best practices to protect and support employee health and safety, connected farmers to medical professionals and other specialists to foster an environment of education, actively engaged with a multitude of local and state community partners, and advocated and organized the delivery and distribution of PPE and other resources for farmworkers.

Dr. Thompson's dedication to a sustainable future for the Columbia River Gorge community and its lands is proven in her long list of accomplishments. Her selfless drive to make our community better is inspiring, and she will most certainly be an invaluable asset to the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin Roby".

Erin Roby