

Chair senator Dembrow, Vice-Chari Thomsen and Members of the Senate Committee on Education

I am writing in support of SB 404-2. I am serve on the Advisory committee with Oregon Climate Agriculture Network (OrCAN).

I support SB 404-2 because it will invests in helping Oregon Farmers transitioning to organic practices.to meet the demand for organic food. Also the general public will benefit because there will be more nutritious and safe organic food products available and organic practices are more safe for the environment as a whole. Also I emphasize support for the creation of a new Soil Health Specialist position with the Oregon Department of Agriculture.(ODA). This position is vital because it will provide in-house expertise at ODA to conserve and improve soil health on Oregon's agricultural lands. Healthy soils are critical to all of Oregon agricultural lands which are under even greater stress from climate impacts such as unpredictable weather including extreme heat, drought, intense rainfall events, invasive species and new diseases and wildfire. ODA needs this position to not only work with its clients - farmers, ranchers, and soil water conservation districts - but also to serve as a liaison with OSU School of Agriculture, NRCS, USDA, etc. to promote soil conservation policies and programs state-wide.

Thank you.

Ron Bunch