



2/3/2022

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

Re: SB 1532 -2 amendment

Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding SB 1532 and the -2 amendment.

The last few years have been devastating to Oregon's agricultural producers, from COVID-19 and market disruptions, to a series of natural disasters including fire, ice, heat, and drought. As Oregon's farmers struggle to adapt to an ongoing pandemic and a changing climate, they have an emergent and critical need for increased research and extension support to assist in these transitions. The ability to meet this need for the ag sector will undoubtedly require new expertise, and significant additional state funding. However, over this same timeframe, Oregon State University has struggled with a \$2 million shortfall, unable to even meet current service levels, which include service to our agricultural sector.

The first priority in the legislature should be to address the University's \$2 million shortfall, and ensure that current service levels can continue. After this, any additional funding from the legislature for positions serving agriculture should be provided generally, rather than defining specific University position descriptions in statute.

Agriculture is a dynamic industry, with needs and priorities changing all the time. The University needs flexibility with funding that allows faculty to work on issues of highest priority at any given time.

We are supportive of the addition of new agricultural specialists. However, these should be assigned as part of an increased budget to the College of Agricultural Sciences/Oregon State Extension, so that this increased capacity can align with and adapt to the highest priorities within the College and within the agricultural industry as a whole.