



February 3, 2022

Chair Golden:

On behalf of Friends of Family Farmers (FoFF), I'm happy to share our support for SB 1532, which will invest critical and timely resources to support family farmers and ranchers in every corner of our state. Family farmers are among those who prioritize socially responsible and ecologically sound agricultural practices, and contribute substantially to their local and regional economies. As a strong coalition of responsible farmers, we are excited by the opportunities to grow and develop Oregon's organic sector with the supports laid out in SB 1532.

With added technical assistance through the investments in SB 1532, Oregon can help support the family farmers who serve as economic pillars in our rural communities. FoFF serves 4,800 of these farmers throughout Oregon, who work in all sectors of agriculture including livestock, row crops, orchards, and seed production — especially in rural areas of our state. These small and mid-size farmers make our rural economies stronger. They employ local community members, source local materials, and contribute to local taxes. Family farmers are the backbone of Oregon's local agricultural economy, and it is essential that we invest in this evolving and essential industry.

SB 1532 will provide family farmers the technical assistance needed to keep up with Oregon's fast-growing organic sector — one of the fastest growing sectors of agriculture in Oregon. With more and more of our farmers employing organic practices, we are excited for the opportunities this legislation would provide, which would help all farmers. Not all of our farmers are certified organic, but many are transitioning in that direction or utilizing organic practices on their farms in a variety of ways, and would equally benefit from these investments. SB 1532 will ensure that resources reach the growing number of producers that are already using, or planning to transition to, these organic practices.

With the limited resources currently available to the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems, the existing OSU extension agents have already been incredible resources for both organic and conventional farmers, and now the Legislature has an opportunity to ensure that this good work is expanded. SB 1532 would create five additional extension agents to assist Oregon farmers and ranchers, during a pivotal time for these businessowners — many of whom are still struggling to recover from the decimation created by last summer's extreme heat wave, in addition to the ongoing impacts caused by the pandemic.

Our small farmers are in desperate need of the assistance offered by OSU Extension Services. Additional agents would be invaluable to our farm and ranch communities.

Oregon is falling behind other states when it comes to family-operated organic production. This legislation offers a critical opportunity to not only assist our farmers and ranchers, but to reestablish Oregon as leaders in this sector. It's time to bring Oregon farmers back on track to compete in this fast-growing industry. This technical assistance will also aid the hundreds of non-certified organic farms who use organic practices and will provide resources to any farm wishing to explore production methods to reduce chemical input costs and benefit the long term health of their land.

Friends of Family Farmers thanks Chair Golden, and all the members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife Recovery, for your diligent work on this important issue. On behalf of family farmers across our state, we urge swift action to pass SB 1532.

Thank you,

Alice Morrison  
Organizational Director  
Friends of Family Farmers