



February 8, 2022

Chair Jeff Golden
Vice Chair Dallas Heard
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery
State Capitol - Salem, OR

Support for SB 1534: Natural and Working Lands

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Heard, and members of the committee,

The American Farmland Trust is a national organization that has had a presence in the Pacific Northwest for over 20 years. **We support SB 1534, the Natural and Working Lands (NWL) bill, and the -2 Amendment.**

This bill lays the foundation for the state to support the resilience of Oregon's farmland and rangeland, both increasing carbon sequestration and supporting rural economies. It hits the triple bottom line that reflects our own mission: protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land.

Farmers and ranchers are facing extreme conditions, which impact the productivity of their land. Drought, heat, and wildfire have put agriculture, the food system, and rural economies at risk. The NWL bill supports healthy soils, which will protect from drought and floods. Healthy soils retain more water, improve water quality, are rich in biodiversity, and are more productive.

Importantly, the NWL bill is rooted in voluntary conservation, linking economic viability with stewardship for the land. This approach supports farmers and ranchers who are eager to adopt new practices. It lays the foundation for the state to provide financial incentives and a robust, knowledgeable technical assistance system. Producers will be better positioned to leverage federal funding, which can improve the viability of a farm or ranch by reducing the upfront costs for equipment, supplies, and labor.

What's good for the land is good for the farmer. **Please support SB 1534 to help shape the future of Oregon's natural and working lands.**

Sincerely,

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