

Submitter: Gary Pendergrass
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB643

We are three landowners in Gopher Valley area N of Sheridan.

We are working with OSU on their Maple/Walnut/Alder/Hazelnut/Beech sap study. Preliminary results are showing a stellar product with great resale potential. This will help many land owners who have a traditional 'wood lot', vs a mono culture forest.

Including bigleaf maple syrup (and related products...e.g. Walnut sap/syrup, Alder etc.), in Farm Direct will greatly enhance the ability of farmers to begin producing maple and walnut syrup by providing a low-risk entry point for producing and marketing syrups on their farms directly to consumers at roadside stands and farmer's markets.

Syrup made from the sap of bigleaf maple (and walnut trees) is an emerging industry in Oregon that has the potential to make a lasting positive economic impact on small farmers in Oregon.

Western Oregon has a great abundance of bigleaf maple trees and tapping them for sap is a sustainable use with little negative impact. In fact, tapping provides an economic incentive to conserve maple in areas that don't interfere with conifer production.

Syrup is a shelf-stable product with low food safety risks to consumers because of the high brix (sugar content) and low water activity (low amount of water).

As production skills improve some of those producers will be able to move beyond Farm Direct and build larger processing facilities licensed by the state that can supply retail markets. We have already had the Department of Ag here to view the process and provide input on building our 'sugar shack' (the term used for the processing shack) and plan on requesting a return visit within the next few weeks.

Thank you for your consideration,
Gary Pendergrass