

Submitter: Dan Keeley

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and
Water

Measure: HB2998

Hon. members of the Committee:

Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I farm 40 acres of hazelnuts in the French Prairie area of the Willamette Valley and presumably am the type this bill is aimed at given that most large farms are well aware of soil health and its importance. I oppose this bill for the following reasons:

1. The subject of this bill is already a top priority for OSU extension and soil conservation districts. There is no need to heap on more rules to encourage them. The major effect of this bill will be to soak up money in additional administrative costs. The secondary effect will be to slightly raise the budgets of the Statewide extension services. While that is a laudable goal, why not simply allocate additional funds for that purpose and let the experts allocate the money where it is most needed?
2. Considerable numbers of nut growers in my area cannot take advantage of this or any other federal program due to conflicting wetland regulations making accepting federal money too risky legally. This references prior converted wetland regulations.
3. The "voluntary incentives" are not likely to be big enough to change behaviors on the ground, especially given that existing rules restricting erosion have had minimal effect even with significant penalties in place. There will also inevitably be another sheaf of paperwork to fill out and enforcement mechanisms to create. An admittedly small (semi retired) farmer such as myself doesn't have time for the current mountain of OSHA, tax and other paperwork much less time for adding another pile.

If you want to encourage soil conservation fund the existing agencies properly. If you want to sequester carbon, establish a market. Meanwhile let's pass on more bureaucracy.

Sincerely
Dan Keeley