

**Testimony to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural  
Resources and Water  
On HB 2998**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

ODC supports HB 2998, which will establish the Oregon Soil Health Initiative. Using a voluntary, incentive-based approach, it will leverage existing programs to assist Oregon's producers in improving the soil health of their operations.

Healthy soils are able to retain more water, provide more nutrients, sequester more carbon, and produce healthier, more resilient crops. There are a variety of ways to achieve soil health, and like most things in nature, there is no "one size fits all" approach -- no one practice achieves all goals or is right for all situations.

This bill brings together OSU (both Extension and College of Ag), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Department of Agriculture, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts as collaborators in providing interested producers with information, technical outreach, access to demonstration equipment and education and help with accessing financial resources.

Farmers need and want technical assistance with improving their soil health, but it needs to be specific to their geography and commodity. Ensuring that research is focused on the needs of Oregon producers and their various commodities is essential. Involving trusted farm service providers such as SWCDs and OSU Extension staff in delivering technical assistance assures better uptake of information and practices. And because producers really learn best from other producers, hosting farmer-to-farmer education opportunities is a winning strategy for communicating information.

This bill is not judging or disrespecting any specific production methodology. Rather, it creates opportunities for all producers to make improvements that over time will benefit them economically by increasing yields and reducing inputs and will benefit the environment and their communities.

OEC urges you to pass HB 2998.