



Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chantay Jett and I am the Executive Director of Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness (WVCW), a non-profit 501(c)(3) serving as the designated Community Mental Health Program for Wallowa County. WVCW supports Senate Bill 955 and the establishment of an endowment to fund the implementation and operation of an AgriStress Helpline in the state of Oregon.

Our organization has dedicated 2022 and 2023 to suicide awareness and prevention. Wallowa County has experienced 14 suicides in the past two years representing an epidemic which has shaken this frontier county to its core. In many conversations about awareness and prevention, there is significant alarm with the ranching and farming population with regards to social and geographical isolation, weather variability, and fluctuating commodity prices being core concerns.

AgriStress is a multi-state free and confidential crisis and support line that can be accessed 24/7 and has interpretation services available in 160 languages. AgriStress would be directly linked to 988, however it will be specialized in understanding why agriculture is unique, it's values, stressors and is staffed with folks with lived experience.

It is vitally important we create access to care that is specific to this population of workers who do not typically access the healthcare systems in traditional ways. Creating new, confidential paths for folks to reach out when they're experiencing stressors will help fight against the statistic of males in this industry who are two times more likely to die by suicide than the general population.

Please support this bill and schedule SB955 for a work session to see this vital resource move forward. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Chantay Jett  
Executive Director