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March 14, 2023

Chair Helm and Members
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources & Water
State Capitol
Salem, OR

Re: HB 3244 – Agriculture competitiveness study

Dear Chair Helm and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3244. This bill would establish the structure to evaluate the economic competitiveness of Oregon agricultural products within the United States domestic market, considering a variety of factors.

1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that works with Oregonians to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

We have long worked closely with farmers and ranchers across the state to protect the land base that is the critical component of Oregon's #2 industry – agriculture. Oregon agriculture consists largely of family farms, who grow over 200 different different crops. Oregon leads the nation in production of almost a dozen crops. The value of Oregon agriculture has grown steadily over the past two decades - now topping \$33 billion and employing over 1 in 5 Oregonians - even when other industries have gone through ups and down. Agriculture is a backbone of the state's overall economy. Yet too many Oregonians, including elected officials at all levels, do not understand that, and therefore we see regular threats to the foundations of agriculture – including land. We believe HB 3244 will help provide the information needed to support the continued health of Oregon agriculture.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Kyle McCurdy".

Mary Kyle McCurdy
Deputy Director

