

**TO: Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education  
Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair**

**DT: April 26, 2023**

**RE: HB 5025 - Support of OSU Statewides- Extension, Agricultural Experiment Station and Forest Research Lab**

Co-Chairs & Members of the Committee:

As a member of Oregon's food and beverage sector, I am writing to express my strong support for the OSU Statewides' budget in HB 5025.

OSU Statewides contribute greatly to Oregon's food and beverage sector through applied research and distribution of knowledge through OSU's statewide Extension network. It is important that the OSU Statewides receive continued service level funding and receive focus on sustainable food systems.

The OSU extension service is critical in providing much needed support to the food and agriculture sectors in Oregon. Many small farmers and producers struggle with meeting regulatory requirements for the Food Safety Modernization Act as well as the FSMA Final Rule on Produce Safety. OSU provides support to these industries to gain the technical knowledge necessary to meet the regulatory requirements of FSMA. This is only a small part of what they do to support industry.

- As a graduate from the Department of Food Science & Technology (FST), I can testify that FST alumni receive relevant degrees and are competitive for high quality jobs within the industry. OSU and FST graduates will drive change within Oregon's food and beverage industry and accelerate the implementation of sustainable food systems. Oregon's food and beverage industry will become more diverse. Promotion of knowledge transfer, increase education of food industry work force and allow industry to promote from within. Increase number of high school graduates interested in careers in food. As a graduate of OSU FST, I have been gainfully employed since getting my degree, and I have hired numerous OSU graduates. As the older generation retires, these students are critical to keep our food and beverage industries running.
- An increased investment in the OSU Statewides will provide regional support of local food and beverage entrepreneurs. Sustainable food technology experts will be placed regionally to consult and connect food businesses with the existing food innovation centers (Portland, Astoria, Corvallis). Additionally, innovation specialists will support the Master Food Preservers programming contributing to delivering affordable, adequate and accessible food across Oregon. An emphasis on regional food production will create jobs and commercial activities in small and medium sized towns. Support of Oregon's local and regional food hubs will enhance the viability of regional food markets beyond direct-to-consumer sale.

Sincerely,  
Parker Cooper