

Oregon Food & Beverage Export Alliance

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

Date: April 26, 2023

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

From: The Oregon Food and Beverage Export Alliance

Dear Co-Chairs & Members of the Committee:

As members of the Oregon Food and Beverage Export Alliance, we are writing to express our support for the OSU Statewides' budget in HB 5025.

The Oregon Food and Beverage Export Alliance includes representatives from many of Oregon's agricultural commodity commissions including;

- Oregon Beef Council,
- Oregon Blueberry Commission,
- Oregon Dairy and Nutrition Council,
- Oregon Potato Commission,
- Oregon Processed Vegetable Commission,
- Oregon Strawberry Commission, and
- Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission.

We strategize together to increase exports of Oregon's amazing food and beverage offerings. To that end, we have joined Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences and its Food Science and Technology Department and Food Innovation Center, to be part of the Resilient Food Systems Initiative which is within the Resilient Oregon Statewides request.

Testimony for the Oregon Food and Beverage Export Alliance:

Oregon is uniquely situated to benefit from exports of the diversity of fine foods and beverages we produce. We have a unique agricultural diversity and bounty. We are a West Coast state with logistic advantages for shipping finished products to Asia and elsewhere. We see the benefits of working together with private food and beverage companies to leverage the market development priorities of Oregon agricultural commodity commissions and other subject matter experts such as the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences, the USDA Foreign Ag. Service, The U.S. Department of Commerce Foreign and Commercial Service, and especially the producers of the amazing products produced from Oregon's outstanding agricultural production.

The benefits from collaboration with like-minded Oregonians will be substantial. As reported by the Oregon Food and Beverage Road Map increased food and beverage exports will have immediate economic impact across the entire state. Communities will benefit from agricultural production and sales in unique climate zones and production areas that give Oregon its diversity in food production not seen anywhere else. Job development in these communities will springboard vertical supply chain economic benefits. Family companies and farms will boost regional economic growth.

There is a problem that the Oregon Food and Beverage Export Alliance seeks to address: We are far behind other states in terms of a public-private partnership to increase food exports. If one studies California, Idaho, Utah, and Washington it becomes dramatically apparent that throughout the Western U.S. other states are investing aggressively in public-private collaborations to boost food exports. In the Midwest, Wisconsin plans to increase food and beverage exports by over \$1 billion over the next five years through their food and beverage export public-private partnership.

This effort is not moving forward in Oregon in the way it needs to if we expect to be competitive. Many of the founding members of the Oregon Food and Beverage Export Alliance have worked independently on agricultural exports of beef, blueberries, cherries, dairy products, potatoes, strawberries, processed vegetables, and other products and they now see the value of working together on a statewide basis.

The Oregon Food and Beverage Export Alliance seeks to work with these and other strategic partners. Oregon growers, ranchers and farmers have pooled funding to study export readiness with the Applied Economics Department at Oregon State University. We have further explored establishing an office at the OSU Food Innovation Center in Portland. To do this we have set up an outstanding working relationship with the Food Science and Technology Department that has offered us the means we need to move forward with our export development plans.

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. Please support full funding for the Resilient Food Systems budget request within the Statewide Public Service Programs budget.

Thank you for reading these comments and we hope to provide further reports about growth through these programs for Oregon food and beverage exports.

