



May 25, 2023

Senate Committee on Rules  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon

Re: Opposition to SB 1058 – Reimbursements for Organic Producers

Chair Lieber, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee:

Our organizations represent Oregon's agricultural community and broader natural resource sector. Within our memberships, we're proud to represent producers utilizing a wide variety of production practices, from organic and conventional to everything in between. From nurseries and wheat to hazelnuts and blueberries, our members are directly involved in farming, ranching, and agribusiness across every county in Oregon.

Our members are all too aware of the rising costs to producers and have been increasingly burdened with economic impacts from weather, market forces, and new regulations. With that in mind, our producer members aim to maintain a level playing field for all and oppose the prioritization of one production practice over others, particularly when it comes to state resources. **SB 1058 would prioritize state funding to assist roughly 1 percent of our agricultural sector, without comparable assistance for the remaining 99 percent.**

Many of our member producers have both conventional and organic acreage, based on market demand and economics; and while the cost of organic production may be higher than conventional, the reward may also be higher. **Organic certified crops bring in significantly higher gross and net revenues per acre than conventional acres, with a 40%-70% price premium on organic products<sup>1</sup>.**

Producers seeking organic certification already benefit from existing federal programs designed to provide cost shares and reimbursements. Since 2010, the US Department of Agriculture has provided organic certification cost share assistance to Oregon producers through the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). This program reimburses producers for up to 75% of their annual costs for organic certification<sup>2</sup>. **Significant support already exists for producers seeking or maintaining organic certification.** Further, the Legislature has declined to increase funding for the OSU Statewide Service Programs for nearly half a decade – programs that benefit all manners of growers and aim to support the newest innovations in conservation and agricultural practices.

<sup>1</sup> [https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/main/about/oragecon\\_report\\_2021.pdf](https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/main/about/oragecon_report_2021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdafiles/organic-certification-cost-share-program/pdf/2023/occsp\\_fact\\_sheet\\_2023.pdf](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdafiles/organic-certification-cost-share-program/pdf/2023/occsp_fact_sheet_2023.pdf)

Over the last several years, Oregon's agricultural sector has been heavily burdened with new regulations passed by the Oregon State Legislature. Many of those have imposed new costs on producers (e.g., overtime for agricultural workers) come without sufficient reimbursement or support to offset those new costs. Thousands of producers are now struggling to stay in business, and we are losing farms every year. We should not be prioritizing state resources for fewer than 500 producers while at the same time failing to provide support to the other 36,000+. Please do not endorse bills or budget proposals that arbitrarily picks winners and losers amongst our members and the broader farming and ranching communities.

Please continue to rely on existing federal dollars to help growers with the costs of organic certification rather than setting aside state funding to support just one percent of Oregon's producers.

Thank you.

Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers  
Far West Agribusiness Association  
Oregon Association of Nurseries  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association  
Oregon Farm Bureau Federation  
Oregonians for Food & Shelter  
Oregon Water Resources Congress