

Testimony Supporting Funding to Implement HB 2998 and SB 530

To: Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Committee
From: Ron Bunch
Re: Testimony Supporting Funding to Implement HB 2998 – Healthy Soils and SB 530 –
Natural Climate Solutions
Date: April 7, 2023

I am testifying to ask you to prioritize funding for HB 2998, the Healthy Soils Bill which would leverage existing state and federal programs and expand resources to support farmers and ranchers with soil health practices.

This bill and Senate Bill 530, Natural Climate Solutions, got my interest because I have a family farming legacy that goes back generations in N.W. Arkansas and in Oklahoma. I grew up listening to stories from my parents and older relatives about severe drought, the dust bowl, the ruin of farming and hardships of that time – all-around suffering, loss of farms, lack of food and near starvation, even violence. The climate/weather eventually stabilized, but generations of people were impoverished. My family like others began a pattern of migration to Oregon and Washington for work and mild/predictable weather.

Because of this cultural memory, the unpredictable and extreme weather of these times scares me. It's not going to get back to normal in a short period of time like it did then. We must get to work now making our farms, ranches, forests, oceans and air and water resources more resilient to climate impacts. The same goes for our communities. Furthermore, we need to use every tool we can including our natural and working lands to mitigate the causes of climate change and ensure ourselves and children a livable world.

Once again, please provide the funding to implement this important legislation.

File: Testimony Ways and Means HB 2998 and SB 530