

Submitter: James Bronec

On Behalf Of: Praying Mantis Farm LLC

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure: HB4060

Dear Chair Helm, Vice Chairs Owens and Hartman, and members of the committee:

My name is Jim Bronec and I am a farmer from Canby in Clackamas County. I am writing today in support of the Oregon Agricultural Heritage program and HB 4060. OAHF is the beginning of an investment that the state needs to make if it is truly going to support Oregon's community food systems and agricultural future. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Willamette has some of the most valuable farmland in the entire world and needs protecting. The conservation management plan and conservation easement portions of the program are great examples of supporting the farmer driven desire to protect the ecosystems of our working lands in harmony with food production. We should make these tools available to as many farmers as possible.

I am personally invested in this topic because I value protecting farmland and ecosystems for future generations. There is a lot of pressure in Oregon and my hometown of Canby for land to develop for both housing and industry. Farmland and ecosystems in general, pay the cost for this development. Look at a soil map for the area around the town of Canby, rich loamy soil ideal for agriculture.

There are not enough tools available to keep Oregon's farmland in production and help farmers afford to buy the land they steward. Conservation easements are one of the only widely used tools we are aware of that can permanently lower the cost of accessing farmland. Conservation management plans allow farmers and land stewards to enact the needed restoration and maintenance projects to keep the farm ecosystem functioning and keep our agricultural land viable for generations to come. We are so lucky to have a vibrant community food system here in Oregon and we need to invest in it to keep it viable. This is not the only path forward and we need to continue to find creative, equitable and truly sustainable solutions to our land access crisis, but this is a place to start. Thank you to the committee members and chair who have prioritized this bill and the Oregon Ag Heritage Program. I urge you to support this vital program for the sake of Oregon's communities, land and agricultural future.

Sincerely,

Jim Bronec  
Praying Mantis Farm LLC

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