

Submitter: Kate Perle

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Natural Resources

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5039

Dear Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee:

I'm a farmer on Eugene's urban growth boundary expressing strong support for \$5M in OWEB's budget for renewal of the Natural and Working Lands Fund, which provides incentives and technical support to help landowners, land managers, environmental justice communities, and Tribes adopt practices that support natural climate solutions on Oregon's natural and working lands, including farms and ranches.

Climate change affects all my daily decisions and adopting practices that mitigate climate change helps me be more resilient to its impacts.

This funding launched the State's grant program providing payment for agricultural practices featuring carbon sequestration, water quality and habitat benefits. It takes time for farmers and ranchers to learn to use these funds effectively, making continuity of this funding critical. When funding is available one year and not the next, interest in the programs decreases, and it becomes impossible for farmers to plan their year's work utilizing best practices if they don't have the support needed to make those changes. We need to make sustainable land management and conservation the norm for all working lands to create the level of resilience we will need in the face of climate uncertainty.

Natural climate solutions take time to establish and will cost more to build in the future. The fund is 1-year old and doing great work, but sustained support creates momentum that moves the work from a start-up phase to an established effort that can start reaping returns on the initial investment. It's a lot like compounding interest on an investment. We need to grow the acreage of working land operating in a way that is best for everyone, not just the landowners.

Climate resilience is the long term overall benefit from working lands operating in this way, but there are many other more immediate and tangible benefits that occur as a result of this work: managing wildfire risk, improving water filtration and storage, lowering water temperatures, maintaining biodiversity, providing pollinator habitat, improving soil health, and reducing flood damage. All these benefits add up to far more than the money invested-over time we reap great rewards for our investiture today.

I urge your support for the inclusion of the \$5M investment of the NWL Fund in OWEB's budget for the 2025-2027 biennium. Thank you!

Thank you,
Kate Perle
Small is Beautiful farmstand
Eugene