



In Support of SB 887 - ODA Organic Policy Specialist Position

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash and Members of the Committee:

My name is David Wieland, Policy Advocate at Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon. I am writing in support of SB 887 to create an Organic Policy Specialist position at the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon (PHFO) is dedicated to ensuring all Oregonians have consistent access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food. We recognize the critical role that a strong local food system plays in addressing food insecurity, particularly for low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately impacted by systemic barriers to food access.

Oregon must continue to prioritize support for organic agriculture, and there is a growing need for a policy specialist who understands the principles and practices of organic farming, production, and market creation. A robust local food system, grounded in organic practices, helps build food sovereignty, strengthens community resilience, and reduces reliance on distant supply chains that can be vulnerable to disruptions.

As trade uncertainties and extreme weather events disrupt Oregon's food and agricultural systems, organic practices offer solutions that support agricultural and economic resilience while creating new market opportunities for local farmers. Strengthening local organic production not only sustains farmers but also enhances community food security by ensuring that fresh, healthy foods are more readily available and affordable. Investing in an Organic Policy Specialist at ODA provides long-term support for an agricultural sector that delivers wide-ranging benefits to Oregon and its residents, fostering a more just and sustainable food system.

We urge policymakers to seize this opportunity to bolster Oregon's local food infrastructure, promote environmental stewardship, and take meaningful action to reduce food insecurity across the state.

Sincerely,

David Wieland
Policy Advocate
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon