



December 19, 2025

Co-Chair Janeen Sollman & Co-Chair Ricki Ruiz
Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee
900 Court Street SE, Salem, OR 97301

Re: OSU Statewides Programming and the Organic Agriculture Program

Dear Co-Chair Sollman and Co-Chair Ruiz and Members of Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee:

We, the undersigned, urge you to prioritize support for OSU Statewides programming, which is currently facing a disproportionate 7.1% budget cut on the recommendation of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC).

These programs are essential to Oregon’s rural communities and natural resource industries. Cuts of this magnitude, approximately \$14 million biennially, would limit economic growth and could lead to the closure of a research facility, the loss of approximately 40 positions—potentially including the Organic Extension Program—and reductions in services.

We believe that Oregon should not make disproportionate cuts that impact the state's agricultural and natural resource industries, which are already under-funded. The OSU Statewides (OSU Extension, Ag Experiment Stations, Forest Research Lab) are deeply rooted in every Oregon county, providing integrated research, education, and outreach that support thriving agricultural and food systems, sustainable natural resource management, and healthy communities.

The Organic Agriculture Program is a first-of-its-kind program that is supporting producers of all sizes, certified or not, throughout the state, with technical assistance and applied research. The Program works across cropping systems and is enhancing the viability of Oregon agriculture through improved soil health, cover crop adoption, ecological pest management, locally adapted cultivars, farm viability, and transition to organic and other ecological methods.

Oregon has long been a leader in the organic movement, which continues to offer triple bottom line benefits and opportunities to the state. Organic practices result in resilient soils, cleaner water, more biodiversity, and healthier communities. And the organic sector surpassed \$71 billion in 2024, marking a 5.2% increase from the previous year—double the growth rate of the total food marketplace. In 2023, amidst the organic sector's rise, driven in part by Gen Y's and Gen Z's willingness to pay a premium for organic products (reflecting a generational shift toward values-aligned purchasing), the legislature declared organic one of several "emerging industries" and allocated funding for an independently researched Organic Market Assessment.

According to the assessment, there is potential for growth in Oregon's organic market. The assessment included data from distributors that indicate that only 10 to 16 percent of organic foods delivered to Oregon's customers are from Oregon farms, suggesting significant room for growth in several organic food categories across the state.

Not only is organic agriculture an emerging economic sector with significance for Oregon, it is the preference of young farmers. According to OSU research, Oregon farmers are aging out, the average age is over 58, and many do not have identified successors. Having an agricultural sector that is attractive—and offers a path to farm viability—is important to young farmers.

According to the 2022 National Young Farmers Coalition survey of farmers under 40, of the more than 10,000 farmers surveyed, only 25% used only conventional practices. The rest used a combination of organic, regenerative, and sustainable practices. Although some of those words have variable definitions, the survey also revealed that 21% of young farmers surveyed had an organic certification for their farm. This is far above the national average and shows that protecting the state's investment in the Organic Extension Program is critical to equipping our state to serve the next generation of farmers.

In a reality where overall farm numbers continue to fall each year, organic practices and certifications can provide a viable market and bright future for Oregon agriculture. We cannot

lose a program that directly supports one of the only sectors of agriculture experiencing rapid growth and attracting a new generation of farmers.

Please maintain support for OSU Statewides and the Organic Agriculture Program.

Sincerely,



Amy Wong – Oregon Organic Coalition and Organic Stakeholders:

Annie Hoy	
Nellie Lisbeth McAdams	Oregon Agricultural Trust
Kathleen Bauer	
Elaine Nelson	
Amy Brown	Ladybug Brand Organic Produce
Krista Kinder	Organically Grown Company
Mike Dill	OGC Logistics
Shawn Linehan	
Tim Miller	Oregon Business for Climate
Kara LaVelle	Hummingbird Wholesale
Kris Kaul	
Stefan Seiter	Oregon State University - Crop and Soil Science
John DeRosier	Organic Farm
Ben Bowell	Oregon Tilth
Faith Van De Putte	Midnight's Farm
Amber Schat-Kenig	Ecological Ag Management, LLC
Jim Fields	Fields Farm
Aaron Nichols	Stoneboat Farm
Paul Harcombe	
Ken Smith	Anderson Blues
Deborah Hobbs	
David Gifford	Wild earth family farm
Chris Roehm	Square Peg Farm, Inc.

Josh Noll	Adaptive seeds
Azure Akamay	
Beth Hoinacki	Goodfoot Farm
Brian Rohter	Heart Island Farm LLC
Allison Keir	Oregon Tilth
Eliza Mason	Lilliputopia Farm
Gordon Merrick	Organic farming research foundation
Chris Schreiner	
Brian M. Buxton	Managing Member, Buxton Farms, LLC and Treasurer, Oregon Organic Hazelnut Collective
Patricia Merritt	
Adam Drazan	
Gwendolyn Wyard	Strengthening Organic Systems, LLC
Greg Jones	Abacela
Bonnie Hildebrand	
Lisa Rezendez	Green Heart Garden
Kara Huntermoon	Heart-Culture Farm Community
Oriana Kahn Hurwit	
Sachin Bangalore	Rhythm Seed Farm
Jesus Ramirez	Lost Valley Education Center
David Hoffman	Lane County Master Gardener Class Of 1984
Oliver Hayes	Toadstool Farm
Sarah Kelly	
Trenton Tocher	
C Barlow	
Faren Leader	
Gen Ohta	
Valeria Clarke	
Rhiannon Patterson	
B. Anderson	
Eva Swaim	
Robin Gray	
Stardust Pine	SOCAC
Alice Levey	
Jerrilee Geist	
Edward Leber	Thermo-Fisher Scientific

Max Wilbert	
Genie Harden	Small Ruminants Network
Kallie Tocher-Woolsey	4-H
Sarah Hale	
Andrew Haupt	
Ben Burmeister	
Andra Vltavín	
Sabin Dorner	
Tao Orion	Resilience Permaculture Design, LLC
Briana Hemry	
Lina Meade	
Breanna Clark	
Carly Itami	
Nicki Youngsma	
Jenny Downes	
Toni Pogue	
Mary E Hurley MD	Willamette Valley Oregon Fibershed
Forest Resener	
Moriah Karlin-Rafael	
Wendy Mulhern	
Marjory House	Oregon Biodynamic group
Kathleen Zappelli	
Marsha Barr	
Andrew Schwarz	Seed Forest Design LLC
Allison Elkins	
Elise Peter	
Aaron Hamilton	Heart Culture Farm
Ryan Tomlin	Duncan Family Farms
Olivia crooker	
Kristin Rasmussen	
Katrina Salicrup	
Devin Kesner	
Sam Mize	
Vance Kimball	
Sara Smith Spahn	
Kari Rein	

Lane Selman	Oregon State University
Mike Spath	Five Points Vineyard
Jennifer Davis	Scout Bee Farm
Stephanie Buddenbaum	People's Food Co-operative
Mike Menes	True Organic Products
Sebastian Aguilar	Chickadee Farm
Liz Cawood	
Susan Heath	
Brady Jacobson	Mt Hood Organic Farms
Kaseja Wilder	Kaseja Wilder LLC
Lilly Anderson	Bare Thread Productions
Brad Lerch	Cafe Mam & Royal Blue Organics
Benjamin Eyer	Finite Cellars and Admeo
Shin Lee	
Brad Ramsey	Benton Soil and Water Conservation District
Joyce Heinke	Master Gardener
Carl Heinke	Master Gardener
Pryor Garnett	Garnetts Red Prairie Farm
Kathy Ging	Amethyst Realty LLC
Angela Petty	
Malia McInerney	McDero Farm and Forest Conservation, LLC
Josh Jones	
James Wirth	OSU
Nikita Vincent	Cultural Harvest Collective
Lola Milholland	Umi Organic
Kayla Flores	North powder charter School
Vivien Lee	Rising Star Chinese School
Lorena Cruz	
Rebecca Smith	Linciln County School District
Jody Becker	Lincoln County School District
Elise Pfrommer	Rogue Valley Farm to School
Sarah Danforth	Art Farm Oregon
Ellie Cosgrove	Rogue Valley Farm to School
Jenny Tseng	
Eva Ringstrom	

Izzy Sigrist	
Gordon Merrick	Organic Farming Research Foundation
Ivanna Yang	Organic Trade Association
Kim Gibson Clark	Earth Lab Holdings
Rachel Cross	Acania Farm
Alice Morrison	Friends of Family Farmers
Elizabeth Miller	Minto Island Growers
