



The Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC) is a trade support organization, working to advance the development and growth of the organic industry and community in Oregon. The OOC represents volunteer stakeholders-- farmers, wholesalers, processors, organic certifiers, scientists, consumers and retailers. We lead promotional activities and advocate for state policy to support and grow Oregon's organic trade

Proposed Bill Draft for Feb. 2022

(A more targeted version of SB 404, 2021)

Section 1: Economic Analysis by the Oregon Business Development Department

A comprehensive statewide market analysis of Oregon's organic products sector is critical to the success and growth of organic agriculture and trade. A full market analysis, conducted by Oregon for Oregon, will encompass the wide variety of organic business and labor endeavors throughout the state. Collecting this vitally important baseline data and then applying the expertise of the Oregon Business Development Department will allow for better understanding of where additional private sector investments should be targeted. We have witnessed tremendous growth in Oregon's organic sector, including job growth and positive economic impacts, as consumer demand for organic products continues to grow. This analysis is needed to prepare Oregonians for the future. It will leverage growth opportunities for Oregon, enabling both rural and urban communities to experience the many benefits of organic agriculture.

Section 2: Investments in Organic Extension positions to support farmers and communities

The bill provides funding to expand the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems at OSU Extension Services by hiring a cluster of 5 Organic Specialists. These positions will be tasked with providing technical assistance and research-oriented solutions to organic and conventional farmers who are interested in site-specific support for regenerative solutions and practices. Agriculture in Oregon is comprised of myriad farm types and acres, often with differing needs—farming in the Willamette Valley vs. Eastern Oregon and vegetable cropping vs. legumes and grains. Organic farming is unique and, particularly for farmers transitioning to organic, there is a need for technical and research assistance that extension services is particularly well positioned to provide. As markets demand more organic products, and farmers see the many benefits of transitioning to organic systems, technical support for making that transition is imperative to success. There are opportunities for urban and rural organic farmers,

but there are also barriers and challenges that must be addressed. The proposed cluster hire of five organic positions will advance Oregon's capacity in organic agriculture while assisting conventional farmers interested in utilizing organic practices and solutions, especially when facing extreme weather events.

This expansion builds on a successful public-private partnership between Oregon's organic community and OSU. Oregon Tilth has maintained a formal partnership with Oregon State University (OSU) since 2009, investing over \$250K in OSU to help protect faculty positions in difficult fiscal years. The Oregon Organic Coalition led advocacy efforts in the 2019 session, which resulted in the creation of the 2 Organic Specialist positions that are already serving Oregon farmers and ranchers. This cluster hire of 5 additional Organic Specialists is necessary to meet the existing need to respond to Oregon farmers seeking organic oriented technical assistance, research, and solutions.