

**SENATOR ELIZABETH STEINER**  
**STATE SENATOR**



**OREGON STATE SENATE**  
**DISTRICT 17**

June 20, 2023

Lori Brocker  
Secretary of the Senate  
Oregon Legislature,

Dear Ms. Brocker,

I write today to explain my vote on SB 498A. This was a difficult vote for me. On the one hand, I recognize the challenges facing our farmers, orchardists, and ranchers who are often, as the saying goes, land rich and cash poor. As a result, the need to pay estate taxes creates a significant barrier to passing the farms and ranches on to the next generation, which is important to preserving Oregon's long history of family-based agriculture. SB 498A is a carefully crafted solution that will reduce one of these barriers by exempting family farms from estate taxes under tightly constrained conditions.

This being said, I am concerned about fairness and the long-term ramifications for Oregon's tax base. While this bill helps those who have agricultural businesses, it does nothing to help family-owned businesses where assets are tied up in the business, once again creating a situation where it is difficult to have the liquid assets necessary to pay estate taxes. Additionally, creating this carve-out from estate taxes could begin a process where more and more such carve-outs are requested, thus eroding an important component of Oregon's General Fund revenues.

Thus, I voted yes to protect Oregon's agricultural heritage, but with reservations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Steiner", written in a cursive style.

Senator Elizabeth Steiner, MD