



LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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October 6, 2017

Public Comment to the Clean Energy Jobs Work Group on Agriculture, Forests, Fisheries, Rural Communities, and Tribes

To: Representative Helm and Members of the Workgroup

Re: Senate Bill 1070, Clean Energy Jobs Bill

Dear Representative Helm and Members of the Workgroup,

We are submitting comments on potential cap-and invest policies on behalf of the Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC). The OOC is an organic trade support group, with members and supporters from across Oregon's organic sector—from farmers to processors, wholesalers and retailers, organic policy advocates and consumers—representing Oregon's diverse, economically vibrant, organic trade.

We are encouraged to see Oregon legislators take up the urgent issue of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction strategies. Oregon agriculture is directly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with reports that state water supplies will become increasingly limited, threatening a fundamental resource for the agriculture industry. Also predicted, as a result of climate change, are greater pressure from weeds and pests, increased animal diseases, reduced winter chill hours, and an increased number of extreme weather events.

As this Work Group reviews and makes recommendations on specific components of a cap-and-invest program for Oregon, we encourage you to consider perspectives that reflect the diversity and innovation of Oregon's organic agricultural community. Organic agriculture in Oregon is strong and growing. Oregon is 6th in the nation in total organic acres and 4th in the nation with organic farmgate sales, valued at \$269 million, a 14% increase over 2014, with continued growth predicted. According to Organic certifier, Oregon Tilth, we are also witnessing a recent trend of transition to organic production practices by non-organic growers seeking new opportunities. Oregon's organic sector is hiring employees, adding acreage, and increasing revenue. The economic value that organic agriculture and production brings to Oregon cannot be overstated; the positive environmental impacts of organic agricultural practices, are additionally compelling.

Several recent studies indicate the important roles that organic farming and ranching practices play in addressing climate change. One study, directed by The National Soil Project at Northeastern University,

shows soils from organic farms had 26% more potential for long-term carbon storage and 13% more soil organic matter than soils from non-organic farms. The results were based on 659 organic soil samples from 39 states. These were contrasted with samples from more than 700 non-organic farms in 48 states. This important study provides significant evidence that organic agricultural practices build healthy soils and can be part of the solution in the fight against global warming. Organic agriculture is part of a toolkit of climate solutions. It can help reduce GHG emissions, enhance a powerful resource for sequestering carbon, and provide many additional environmental and human health benefits.

We ask that this Work Group develop policies that reflect the tremendous impact that Oregon's organic agricultural sector has on building healthy, economically viable, communities in the state, and the important role of organic agriculture as a whole in impacting climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration. Specifically, we are asking for:

1. Designated economic credit for organic farming;
2. Credit for specific farming management practices proven to mitigate climate change and enhance carbon sequestration;
3. Expansion of funding for programs to support organic research and education, considering the proven carbon benefits of organic farming.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to specifically evaluate and include the benefits and practices of organic farmers in any cap-and-invest policies.

We wish these comments to be submitted as testimony for public hearing.

Stacy Ann Kraker



Chair, Oregon Organic Coalition